

**FIRST LOOK REVIEW: NEW PENTAX DSLRS
K-SERIES ENTHUSIAST & LOW-COST MODELS**



Saturday 29 June 2013

amateur **photographer**

THE WORLD'S NO.1 WEEKLY PHOTO MAGAZINE

www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

RAW VERSUS **JPEG** How JPEGs cut corners

How to improve your images with flexible, high-quality processing

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Panasonic



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Apr '13



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Amateur Photographer For everyone who loves photography

IT'S ONLY natural, I suppose, to want more than we actually need. It probably comes from some survival instinct that makes us save, store and load up the cave to get us through long winters. Maybe some of us have more camera kit than we really need, or better camera kit than we really make use of. We strive to achieve the best we can, but sometimes don't understand every step on the path we think will get us there.

I almost always capture raw and JPEG files simultaneously. Initially, I did this because I am a coward. I hoped to be able to enjoy the convenience of the JPEG while being able to relax a little knowing that two thirds of my memory card would be

occupied by a giant safety net. That net could take me back to the moment just before I pressed the shutter release, should something come out not quite the way I intended. Of course, shooting raw shouldn't be about the safety net. It should be about maximising image detail and dynamic range, and the finite control of every technical element of the image, as Ian Farrell explains in *The Raw Truth* on pages 45–49. When you look at the way you use your images, that may or may not be more than you need.



Damien Demolder
Editor

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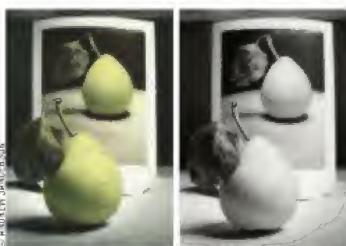
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Andrew Sanderson with tips and techniques in *Photo Insight*

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The launch of the K-50 and K-500 means that Pentax now has five DSLRs, but where do these latest cameras fit into the range? Richard Sibley had a first look at both models

HOW TO HAVE YOUR PICTURES PUBLISHED IN READER SPOTLIGHT Send in a selection of up to ten images. They can be either a selection of different images or all have the same theme. Digital files sent on CD should be saved in a Photoshop-compatible format, such as JPEG or TIFF, with a contact sheet and submission form. Visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/spotlight for details. We cannot publish images without the necessary technical details. Each RGB image should be a minimum of 2480 pixels along its longest length. Transparencies and prints are also accepted. We recommend that transparencies are sent without glass mounts and posted via Special Delivery. For transparencies, prints or discs to be returned you must include an SAE with sufficient postage.

HOW TO CONTACT US Amateur Photographer, IPC Media, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU **AP Editorial Telephone:** 0203 148 4138 **Fax:** 0203 148 8123
Email: amateurphotographer@ipcmedia.com **AP Advertising Telephone:** 0203 148 2516 **Email:** mark_rankine@ipcmedia.com **AP Subscriptions Telephone:** 0844 848 0848
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THE AP READERS' POLL

IN AP 8 JUNE WE ASKED...
Is your photography stuck in a rut?



YOU ANSWERED...

A Yes, it is 30%
B It was, but now I'm getting out of it 8%
C No, but it can be sometimes 36%
D No, and it never has been 17%
E Maybe – I don't know 9%

THIS WEEK WE ASK...

Do you see the benefits that raw files deliver?

VOTE ONLINE www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

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EF 17-40mm f4.0L USM Lens	£629.00	£26.20 P/m
EF-S 17-85mm f4-5.6 IS USM Lens	£339.00	£22.60 P/m £20 CB
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EF 70-200mm f/2.8L USM	£989.00	£41.20 P/m
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News | Analysis | Comment | PhotoDiary 29/6/13

“Photographers should defend their right to take photos...”

London Palladium drama, page 7

- ‘Weather-resistant’ DSLR • £530 K-50 due this month

PENTAX LAUNCHES DSLR FOR OUTDOORS

PENTAX has unwrapped the K-50, a 16.28-million-pixel DSLR built to be weather-resistant and dust-proof.

The K-50, which incorporates 81 ‘anti-water’ seals, will debut alongside two new lenses, an 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 and a 50-200mm f/4-5.6, also designed to be weather-resistant.

Pentax claims the K-50 can withstand temperatures as low as -10°C.

The K-50’s ‘dust-removal’ mechanism is intended to shake dust from the surface of the imaging sensor. However, the lenses, which both feature six weather seals, are not dust-proof.

Due out at the end of June, priced £529.99 body only, the camera features a sensor-shift shake-reduction system designed to allow photographers to minutely adjust composition alignment horizontally and vertically, as well as employ ‘slant-wise rotation’. The camera also includes a horizon-correction function.

The shake-reduction system offers a 4-stop benefit, claims Pentax.

The K-50 has an 11-point SAFOX IX+ AF module (which includes nine cross-type sensors), an optical viewfinder, full HD movie recording and in-camera raw-file processing.

The camera boasts a top ISO of 51,200, six frames-per-second shooting and a tweaked version of Pentax’s Prime M image-processing engine to help boost

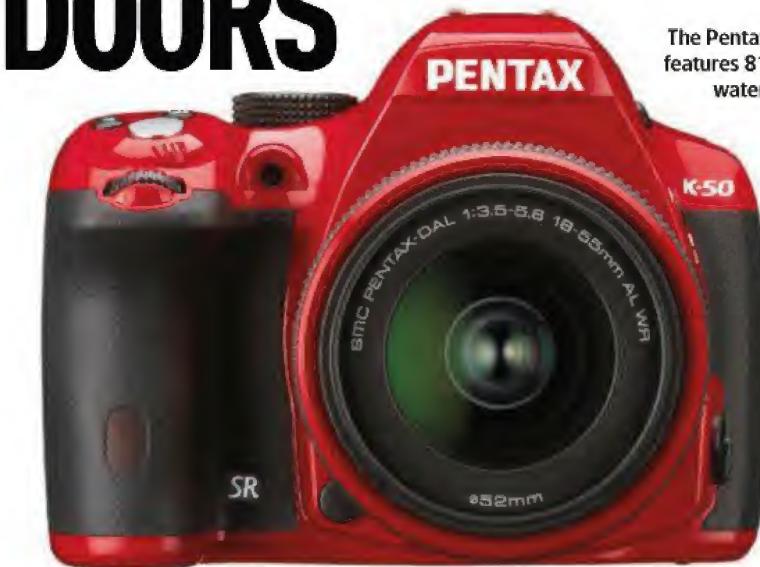


image quality.

The imaging sensor measures 23.7x15.7mm and the K-50 has a maximum shutter speed of 1/6000sec.

Also featured is a 3in, 921,000-dot resolution LCD monitor and 77-segment metering system.

The standard body colour options are white, black and red. However, there will be a customising service available, offering 120 colour combinations (20 body colours and six grips), so purchasers can personalise their new kit. At the time of writing, the price of this service had not been announced.

Like the K-30, which continues in the range, the K-50 features interchangeable focusing screens.

The K-50 will also go on sale with an 18-55mm weather-resistant lens in a kit priced £599.99.

Pentax has also unveiled the K-500, an ‘entry-level’ model that lacks the weather sealings of the K-50 and does not feature a focus indicator through its viewfinder.

The K-500 will cost £449.99 with an 18-55mm kit lens but will not be available body only.

● See Richard Sibley’s first look of the Pentax K-50 and K-500 on pages 10-11

SNAP SHOTS

● Tens of thousands of campaigners have signed a petition to save the National Media Museum in Bradford, West Yorkshire, after bosses warned it could close if subject to further government cuts. At the time of writing more than 35,000 had signed the petition demanding Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne consider the impact of the government’s comprehensive spending review on 26 June. For details of the Save the National Media Museum in Bradford campaign, visit www.38degrees.org.uk.

● Canon is set to release a firmware update for the EOS M, which it claims will speed up the camera’s hybrid AF system, following feedback from customers. The version 2.0.0 update, which is free, was released in mid-June.



£5K HASSELBLAD CSC ON SALE

HASSELBLAD has announced the UK availability of the Lunar compact system camera (CSC).

The Lunar was unveiled at last year’s photokina trade show as a 24.3-million-pixel, APS-C-format CSC aimed at enthusiasts, produced in a tie-up with Sony.

The Lunar (pictured left) is

compatible with E-mount lenses, and A-mount lenses via an adapter.

The kit, which includes an 18-55mm lens as standard, costs £5,280.

The Lunar has gone on sale, but only at the following selected stores: Peter Jones in Sloane Square, camera dealer Richard Caplan, Harrods and Selfridges.

The Lunar is not available body only.



Do you have a story?

Contact Chris Cheesman
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Fax: 0203 148 8130
amateurphotographer@ipcmedia.com

A week of photographic opportunity

PHOTODIARY

Wednesday 26 June

EXHIBITION

First solo show by Nige Ollis, until 30 June at Rubicon, Bristol BS6 6PF.



© NIGE OLLIS

EXHIBITION Sean Smith: On the Margins, last day, at Catacomb Z, Kensal Green Cemetery, London W10 4RA.

Thursday 27 June

EXHIBITION

Take a View Landscape Photographer of the Year, until 29 June at Glasgow central station, Glasgow G1 3SL. **EXHIBITION** Trailblazers by Anita Corbin until 29 September at the Discovery Museum, Newcastle, Tyne & Wear NE1 4JA. Tel: 0191 232 6789. Visit [www.twmuseums.org.uk](http://twmuseums.org.uk).

Friday 28 June

EXHIBITION Visions of the Universe (images of space), until 15 September at National Maritime Museum, Greenwich SE10 9NF. Tel: 0208 858 4422. Visit rmg.co.uk. **EXHIBITION** Hey Charlie by Harry Cory Wright, until 14 September at Eleven, London SW1W 9LX. Tel: 0207 823 5540. Visit [www.elevenfineart.com](http://elevenfineart.com).

Saturday 29 June



EXHIBITION Wildlife images by Dave Marsden at Lakeland Wildlife Oasis, Milnthorpe, Cumbria LA7 7FE. Tel: 01539 563 027. Visit www.wildlifeoasis.co.uk. **EXHIBITION** Environmental Photographer of the Year 2013, until 1 September at Grizedale Visitor Centre, Hawkshead, Cumbria LA22 0QJ. Tel: 01229 860 010. Visit www.qolakes.co.uk.

Sunday 30 June

EXHIBITION Findings, pinhole photography by Tom Hunter, until 19 July at Church Street, Birmingham B3 2RT and St Paul's Square, Birmingham B3 1QZ. **EXHIBITION** Off the Shelf by Hans Van Der Meer, last day, at Other Spaces, Cardiff CF10 1AE. Visit www.otherspaces.co.uk.

Monday 1 July

EXHIBITION Take a View Landscape Photographer of the Year, until 7 July at King's Cross station, London N1 9AP. **EXHIBITION** Somewhere in England: Portraits of Americans in Britain 1942–1945, until 31 December at IWM Duxford, Cambridgeshire CB22 4QR. Tel: 01223 835 000. Visit www.iwm.org.uk.

Tuesday 2 July LATEST AP ON SALE

EXHIBITION Fragile: Photographing Nature, Beauty and Memories, until 6 July at Chris Beetles Fine Photographs, London W1B 4DE. Tel: 0207 431 9. Visit www.chrisbeetlesfinephotographs.com. **EXHIBITION** Death in the Making (photographs of war by Robert Capa), until 6 July at Atlas Gallery, London W1U 7NF. Tel: 0207 224 4192. Visit www.atlasgallery.com.



PENTAX HAILS Q7 AS NEW CSC FLAGSHIP

HOT ON the heels of two new DSLRs (see page 5), Pentax has confirmed plans to launch the Q7, a new flagship compact system camera featuring a 1/1.7in sensor.

Due out in September, the Q7 will house a 12-million-pixel back-illuminated CMOS imaging sensor (without a low-pass filter) and will sit above the Q10 in the Q-system family.

Pentax claims it has improved the signal-to-noise ratio by 60% to boost image quality, especially at high ISOs.

Also, using Pentax's shake-reduction system, the Q7 offers a 3-stop advantage, compared to 2 stops on the current Q10, which will continue in the range.

Meanwhile, a new imaging processor (Q Engine) will reduce the camera's start-up time to 1sec (1.8secs on the Q10), according to Pentax.

Other trumpeted improvements include the addition of an electronic level, a Quick Dial – to which the user can assign five functions – and Eye-Fi card compatibility, allowing wireless transfer of images to a computer, smartphone or tablet.

Pentax also claims to have improved AF accuracy in low light.

The camera carries creative tools such as 'bokeh control' and photographers can shoot at a maximum ISO of 12,800.

Features also include a 3in (460,000-dot) LCD screen, full HD movies and a dust-removal system.

Pentax is also set to release a body-cap-style Mount Shield lens, which is around 7mm thick and weighs 8g.

Features include a focus range of 30cm–2m and an aperture of f/9, according to the spec sheet. It is designed to deliver the 35mm viewing angle equivalent of a 53mm lens on the Q7, for example, and will be the seventh lens for the Q system when it is due to go on sale in September.

A Pentax lens road map – shown at a London press briefing – revealed plans to launch a 'wide' lens and a 'telephoto macro', possibly as early as this year.

'We are committed to the Q system,' said Pentax Ricoh Imaging UK's product coordinator Stephen Sanderson, who added: 'The Q has been massive in Japan.'

The Q7 will be out in 120 colour combinations and the kit will include a 23–70mm (equivalent) lens.

Prices have not yet been confirmed.



SNAP SHOTS

● An Italian photographer was killed by a bullet similar to those used by Thai soldiers while he was covering a military crackdown on anti-government protesters three years ago, an inquest has found. Fabio Polenghi, 48, died as he tried to take photos of the army's assault on the Red Shirt encampment in Bangkok, reported news agency Associated Press.

● Fujifilm plans to launch more mirrorless system cameras and lift its camera division back into the black by 31 March 2014. Fuji reduced the loss of its Imaging Solutions business, which includes colour paper, by 1.8 billion yen, to a deficit of 2.2 billion yen (around £14m), for the year to 31 March 2013.

● Studio lighting specialist Bowens says it is giving away a £160 softbox on purchases of a Gemini 500R or Gemini Pro twin-head kit in a promotion that runs until 31 August 2013. The Luminaire Octobank 90 softbox is ideal for fashion and portrait work, according to Bowens. The Gemini 500R lighting kit costs £950. For details visit www.bowens.co.uk.



Do you have a story?

Contact Chris Cheesman
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Photographer's anger at police photo stop

DRAMA OUTSIDE LONDON PALLADIUM

AP RIGHTS WATCH
Committed to defending your photographic rights!



A PHOTOGRAPHER

claims a police officer used offensive remarks and twice stopped him taking pictures of people queuing outside the London Palladium.

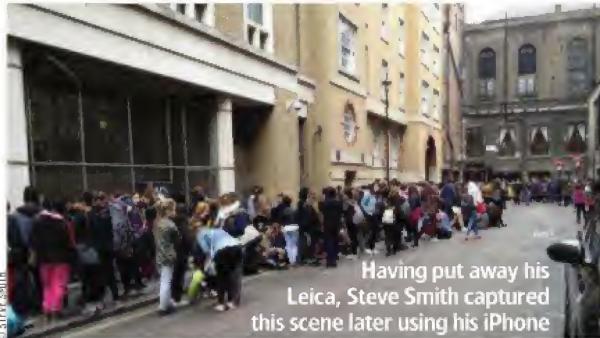
Steve Smith, a Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society, was left fuming after trying to take pictures from a public road at the back of the historic West End theatre, off Oxford Street, at around 10.15am on 31 May.

He had been heading to the nearby Photographers' Gallery on Ramillies Street when he spotted youngsters queuing

outside a box office at the back of the theatre. Fans were hoping for tickets to see US pop star Demi Lovato, who was set to perform at a venue in Notting Hill later that day.

'I had never heard of her, but decided to walk down to the end of the road where there were two police officers at the back door, I assume to keep order,' the photographer told AP.

Smith said he used his Leica MP film camera, handheld, to take a couple of shots of some girls who, seemingly, had been queuing all night.



Having put away his Leica, Steve Smith captured this scene later using his iPhone

'Interesting story, and not really a picture opportunity, but they wanted me to take their picture,' he added.

'I then went up a footpath known as Hills Place and took one [photo] of the police officers and their car.'

'I then wandered back down towards the Photographers' Gallery when one of the policemen confronted me. I suppose I was around 20 metres from the Palladium's back door at the time.'

'He asked what I was doing taking photographs. I politely replied I was looking at what was going on and taking some pictures.'

'Once again I politely pointed out that it's not against the law to take pictures in public unless any officer suspects me of being involved in terrorism.'

'He replied: "Yes it is... if you are causing an obstruction."

Smith (pictured above) denies he was causing an obstruction and says he saw two television crews in the area at the time.

Smith said the officer told him to move on and stop taking photos. The photographer obliged and said he moved about 40 metres away.

Thinking he was clear of any further trouble, he considered taking more shots when the officer confronted him for a second time.

'He said, "I told you to move on – why are you taking pictures of these young girls?"'

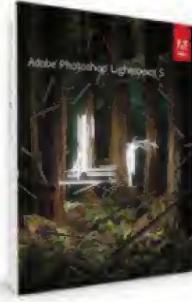
The photographer, who has three daughters, told AP that he found the officer's tone 'very offensive'.

Fearing he would be arrested, Smith left the area and said it appeared the officer was waiting for him to move on.

The Metropolitan Police said the incident was not documented in a police notebook.

Speaking in general terms, a Met spokesman said: 'Clearly, we would expect all our officers to be courteous at all times,' adding that officers were 'policing a large crowd'.

ADOBE RELEASES LIGHTROOM 5



ADOBE has announced the launch of Photoshop Lightroom 5, which promises new editing tools to deliver higher-quality images, more quickly.

For example, the Advanced Healing

Brush aims to fix 'irregularly shaped imperfections' such as dust spots, while the Upright tool is designed to automatically straighten objects such as buildings and ensure level horizons.

Adobe Photoshop Lightroom 5 costs £102.57, or £57.64 for upgrades.

For details and to download visit www.adobe.com/uk/products/photoshop-lightroom.

● See our review of Lightroom 5 on pages 38-39 of this issue



SAMYANG REVEALS LENS DUO

SAMYANG has added a 16mm f/2 optic and a 300mm f/6.3 reflex lens to its line-up.

Both are manual-focus lenses and due out next month.

The 16mm f/2 ED AS UMC CS (pictured above left) will be available in Canon EF and M, Nikon F, Sony A and E, Pentax K, Fujifilm X, Samsung NX, micro four thirds and four thirds mounts. It will cost £419.99.

A Nikon version of the 16mm lens, allowing electronic aperture control for auto

exposure and iTTL flash, will cost £459.99.

The Samsung 300mm f/6.3 ED UMC CS (above right), a reflex lens specifically designed for compact system cameras, features nine elements in six groups, including an ED-type element. The 315g optic, priced £289.99, will be available in Sony E, Fujifilm X, micro four thirds and Canon M fits.

For details visit www.samyang.co.uk or call UK distributor Intro 2020 on 01628 674 411.

AP
THIS
WEEK
IN...

1915

All in an Afternoon.

The amateur should be careful how he chooses his assistants. A young man of my acquaintance lately took advantage of a beautiful June afternoon to do the long-deferred job of photographing some scientific apparatus for a technical work which is in contemplation. The apparatus included a good many glass parts, and altogether bade fair to be a tricky business. His fair cousin Millicent, who happened to be staying in the house, volunteered to assist him, and he looked forward confidently to clearing off the dozen or so exposures in the course of the afternoon. They set to work with a will in the laboratory immediately after lunch, and at a late tea the results of their afternoon's labour were brought out for the common benefit. The sum total of those results was—a portrait of the fair cousin Millicent.

It seems a photographer had become somewhat sidetracked by the assistant recruited to help him take pictures this week in 1915. So AP was prompted to warn readers to choose their assistants carefully. AP's columnist, known as Magpie, explained: 'A young man of my acquaintance lately took advantage of a beautiful June afternoon to do the long-deferred job of photographing some scientific apparatus... the apparatus included a good many glass parts, and altogether bade fair to be a tricky business. His fair cousin Millicent, who happened to be staying in the house, volunteered to assist him, and he looked forward confidently to clearing off the dozen or so exposures in the course of the afternoon. They set to work with a will in the laboratory after lunch, and at a late tea the results of their afternoon's labour were brought out... The sum total of those results was – a portrait of the fair cousin Millicent.'

SNAP SHOTS

● Leica has updated the firmware for its M Monochrom rangefinder. Claimed benefits of firmware update 1.002 include a 'bug fix for increased stability in "discrete"' mode, and better stability when the camera is connected to a USB. For details visit www.leica-storemayfair.co.uk.

● An amateur photographer from Sutton, Surrey, has won a competition staged by whisky maker Glenlivet. Glenn Gowan won the prize with a black & white shot of a tree at Loch Lomond in Scotland, reported yourlocalguardian.co.uk.

● Nikon is offering Coolpix customers the chance to win prizes such as an indoor sky-diving experience and a 'Silverstone challenge' on purchases made until 31 August 2013. Entrants are required to register their purchase online and answer a question. For details visit www.nikoncoolpixoffer.co.uk.



One of the donated prints: 'The Berlin Wall' by John Davies
Donation of 15,000 items to NMM

CONTEMPORARY BOOST FOR PHOTO MUSEUM

THE NATIONAL Media Museum (NMM) has added thousands of contemporary photographs to its historic archives, including images by Martin Parr.

The NMM, which is based in Bradford in West Yorkshire, has acquired around 15,000 items from the Impressions Gallery, which is also based in the city. The NMM says the gallery donated them as a gift.

The collection also includes work by photographers over the past 40 years, such as

Julian Germain, Faye Godwin, Angus McBean and Joy Gregory, alongside press prints, correspondence and other ephemera.

'The aim of the partnership... is to make this rich period of British photographic exhibiting history available to curators, scholars, photographers and the wider public,' said the Impressions Gallery and NMM in a statement.

The NMM, which holds 3.5 million items in its collection, is cataloguing the new images.



PENTAX COMPACT DEFIES MARKET

AS CAMERA makers appear to be lining up to drop low-end digital compacts, Pentax announced the launch of the 'entry-level' Efina.

The move by Pentax is in contrast to the likes of Olympus and Fujifilm, which recently announced plans to pull low-end compacts from their line-ups in the wake of competition from smartphones.

Pentax Ricoh Imaging UK's general manager Jonathan Martin told us: 'At Pentax we recognise that the market for entry-level compact cameras is in decline, but we want to be

able to offer a complete range of cameras to our customers.'

The aluminium-bodied, 14-million-pixel 'card-sized' Efina (pictured above) has a 5x zoom lens, a 2.5in LCD screen and HD movie recording. The lens is designed to deliver the 35mm viewing angle equivalent of a 26–130mm zoom.

Other features include a maximum ISO of 1600, a 'cellphone-like' in-body rechargeable battery and Eye-Fi compatibility.

Priced £79.99, a date for UK availability of the Efina has not yet been announced.

CLUB NEWS

Club news from around the country

1066 MONO PHOTOGRAPHIC

The club, which is aimed at traditional black & white enthusiasts, is due to stage its annual exhibition from 3–11 August at The Stade Hall, Rock-a-Nore Road, Hastings Old Town, East Sussex TN34 3FJ. The show is free to enter, will open from 10am–4pm and includes work by local sixth-form students. The club, which meets at St Barnabas Church in Hastings, currently has 30 members, who describe themselves as 'dedicated darkroom workers'. For details about the club visit www.1066mono.co.uk.



Do you have a story?

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The new Pentax K-50 and K-500 share the same body design

AP hands-on

Pentax K-50 and K-500

The launch of the **K-50** and **K-500** means that Pentax now has five DSLRs, but where do these latest cameras fit into the range? **Richard Sibley** takes a first look at both models

OVER the past few years, Pentax has struggled to compete against the powerhouses of Canon and Nikon, and the huge branding of Sony. However, the buyout of Pentax by Ricoh in 2011 seems to have reinvigorated the company, so it may well start to attract new users to its famous K-mount DSLRs. For instance, since the takeover, we have seen the arrival of the K-30, K-5 II and K-5 IIS DSLRs, and now two more have been launched – the K-50 and K-500.

As the K-5 II, K-5 IIS and K-30 are to continue production, Pentax now has five DSLRs in its line-up.

FEATURES

Essentially, the Pentax K-50 and K-500 are companion models. They are very similar to each other, with their plastic and steel bodies both carrying a 16.28-million-pixel APS-C-sized CMOS sensor and 11-point SAFOX IX+ AF module, as well as nine cross-type sensors. However, the K-50 also has 81 weather-resistant seals

and an AF indicator in its viewfinder.

The K-50 will be available in 120 colour combinations from 20 different body colours, with a choice of six different coloured handgrips. However, the standard K-50 will be available in white, black or red. Custom colours can be ordered via the Pentax website, with a four-week turnaround time, although the price of this service hasn't been finalised.

Both the K-50 and K-500 have an impressive 100% field of view through their respective viewfinders. I took a quick look through the K-500's viewfinder and found it to be excellent – the image was large for a camera of its size, and bright, thanks to the fact that it uses a pentaprism rather than a mirror.

The sensor is based on the Sony model used in the three earlier Pentax K DSLRs, so the dynamic range and high sensitivity performance of the two new cameras should be very impressive. Indeed, like the K-5 II, the highest sensitivity of the new cameras is an impressive ISO 51,200.

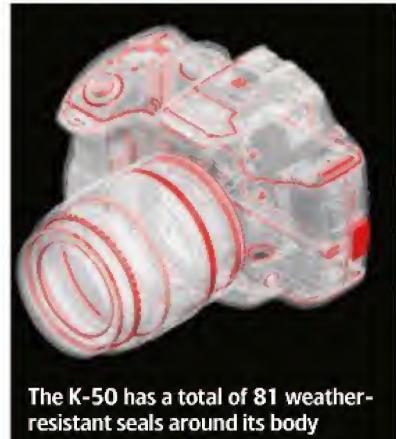
AT A GLANCE

K-500 and K-50

- 16.28-million-pixel, APS-C-sized CMOS sensor
- 11-point SAFOX IX+ AF module
- 100% viewfinder coverage
- ISO 100–51,200
- K-500 RRP £449.99 with 18–55mm DAL kit lens

K-50 only

- 120 different colour variations
- 81 weather seals
- RRP £529.99 body only or £599.99 with 18–55mm DAL WR lens



The K-50 has a total of 81 weather-resistant seals around its body

There is one advantage the Pentax K-50 and K-500 have over any rivals from the market leaders Nikon and Canon – in-camera image stabilisation. The maximum shutter speed of both cameras is 1/6000sec, which is the same as that on the K-5 II and the K-30, whereas the competition generally has a maximum speed of 1/4000sec.

BUILD AND HANDLING

We had the opportunity to get our hands on a sample of the K-500, which has an almost identical build to the K-50. Generally, the design of the Pentax K-500 and K-50 is quite conservative, but its body is more rounded than the others in the K



The K-50 is available in a total of 120 different body colour combinations

'Both the K-50 and K-500 have an impressive 100% field of view through their respective viewfinders'

series. However, it was great to hold, with the handgrip being very well contoured and providing a comfortable and secure position to hold the camera. The camera feels familiar, with all the controls where you would expect them to be.

FIRST THOUGHTS

On paper, the Pentax K-50 and K-500 seem like great cameras, and from what I saw of the K-500 it looks as if they will match the quality of the K-30 (tested in AP 4 August 2012) and the K-5 II (AP 12 January 2013), both of which we rated highly at AP. Enthusiast photographers will enjoy the huge range of shooting and customisation features, many of which we have seen on previous cameras.

However, herein lies the problem. The K-50 and K-500 don't do too much to distinguish themselves from the existing Pentax DSLRs. The company is clearly trying to expand its range to appeal to a wider audience, and the different colour

variations and price points will help do this.

In AP 12 January we asked readers in an online poll how many SLR bodies Pentax would need to be a credible proposition for the amateur, and 60% replied '3-4', 19% said '1-2', 16% said '5-6', 3% said 'more than 9' and 2% said '7-8'. With five DSLRs now in its line-up Pentax has satisfied the majority of AP readers, but what enthusiast photographers will really be looking for in the five models are differences in resolution and sensor technology. Currently, all have the same 16.28-million-pixel sensor.

The weather sealing, 100% viewfinder coverage and improved image quality mean that the K-50 should be an outstanding camera in its own right, but will it be enough to persuade existing users to upgrade? We're looking forward to testing the K-50 and K-500 in the coming weeks.

The Pentax K-500 will be available from the end of June, price £449.99 with 18-55mm DAL lens. The K-50 will also be available from the end of June, price £529.99 body only or £599.99 with 18-55mm DAL WR lens. **AP**



Enthusiast photographers will be impressed by the 100% viewfinder coverage



The Pentax Q7 uses a 1/1.7in sensor, which is larger than the 1/2.3in sensor used previously in the range

PENTAX Q7

ALONGSIDE the new K-series cameras, we also had the chance to look at the new Pentax Q7 and find out about its new larger sensor.

The smallest digital compact camera system is to receive a significant upgrade in September as Pentax launches the new Q7. To date, all the company's Q-system cameras have used the 1/2.3in (6.6x4.6mm) sensor. However, the new camera has a larger 1/1.7in (7.6x5.7mm) sensor, and Pentax has decided not to include an anti-aliasing filter, which should improve image resolution.

Although the difference in dimensions may be slight, the result is that the Q7 will have a surface area of around 43mm², compared to 28mm² in the existing cameras. This means that although the resolution of the Q7 remains roughly the same as the Pentax Q and Q10, at 12 million pixels the photodiodes can be larger. Combined with improvements to image processing, the result is that the signal-to-noise ratio of the Q7 is improved by 60%. This is most noticeable when shooting at high ISO sensitivities – and the maximum sensitivity is an impressive ISO 12,800.

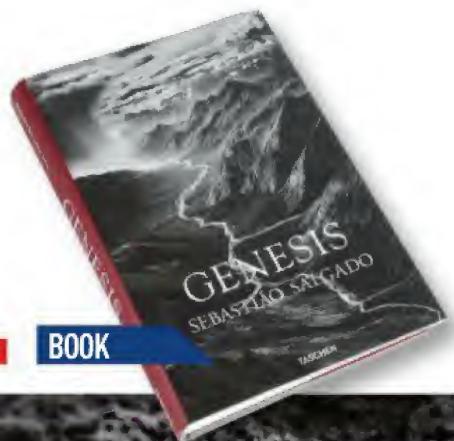
AP has been told that all the existing lenses can be used with the new Q7, which means Pentax must have originally designed the system to cope with the larger imaging circle the slightly larger sensor would require. The only caveat is that when using wideangle lenses with a filter attached, there may be some slight vignetting.

The larger sensor means there is a difference in the 35mm equivalent factor. Originally 5.6x with the other two cameras, it is now 4.6x with the Q7. This means, for example, that the 8.5mm lens is the equivalent of a 47mm lens on the Q and Q10, but the equivalent of a 39.1mm lens on the new Q7.



APReview

The latest photography books, exhibitions and websites. By Jon Stapley



BOOK

Genesis

By Sebastião Salgado
Taschen, £44.99, hardback, 520 pages,
ISBN 978-3-8365-3872-5

FAIR warning – the weight of this hefty hardback may test the resilience of most ordinary coffee tables. It would be a shame if it did end up destroying anyone's furniture, because it's really rather good. Coming off the back of the exhibition of the same name showing at the Natural History Museum until 8 September, this collection of landscape and nature photography by Sebastião Salgado is described as his 'love letter' to the Earth. If so, the Earth should be swooning – Salgado's stately compositions and practised hand at photographing various subjects, from small reptile skin details to wide shots of the crests of great mountains, make the book a thing of wonder. For a souvenir more solid than memories of an exhibition, this is a sure bet.



www.stuckincustoms.com

TREY Ratcliffe has built his travel photography blog into a diverse and engaging resource. Daily updates on photography all around the world means you'll never be short of something to look at. They aren't lengthy, but they generally feature some great photography. Some warning – if you're not a fan of HDR you should proceed with caution, as the site is also the home of a comprehensive 'award-winning' HDR tutorial, and much of Ratcliffe's photography employs the technique. If you are interested, the tutorial itself is good, and Ratcliffe's experience offers tips you may not have considered. Travelling photographers should step right up.



© SEBASTIÃO SALGADO

EXHIBITION

© F&D CARTIER

**Wait and See: A Retrospective**

Until July 27. Ffotogallery, Turner House, Plymouth Road, Penarth CF64 3DH. Tel: 029 2070 8870. Website: www.ffotogallery.org. Open Tue-Sat 11am-5pm. Admission free

SWISS art duo f&d cartier are currently enjoying a month-long stay at the Ffotogallery, following a successful premiere of their work at Diffusion: Cardiff International Festival of Photography. If you missed out then, you would do well to make the trip before 27 July, as there is some interesting imagery to be found from the pair.

Taking a stripped-down approach to

still-life, f&d cartier distil photography into its basic elements, using as few materials as possible to create stylised, unusual images of found objects. The minimalist approach won't be for everyone, but it's refreshing to see how invigorating photography can be even in its simplest forms. Additional new works are included in the exhibition, including a photogram-based piece, and it's well worth visiting.

Precious

By Jane Hilton. Schilt Publishing, £35, hardback, 104 pages, ISBN 978-90-5330-7953

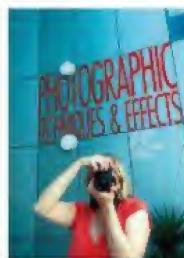


IN THE brothels of Nevada in the USA, where prostitution is legal, Jane Hilton took a plate camera to document the lives and stories of working girls. In a series of simple but powerful portraits, she explores notions of beauty and body image. Her photographic style involves careful interplay of light and shadow – although sometimes there is perhaps a shade too much of the

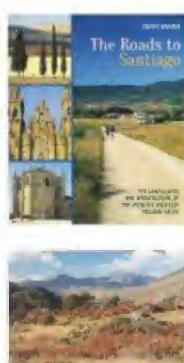
latter – and the effect created is intimate. You really get a sense of the bond of trust between the photographer and her subjects. The girls' stories, appended to the rear of the book, offer invaluable perspective and insight on why they have chosen the life they lead. Hilton clearly respects and admires the women she photographs, and it makes for a fascinating monograph.

CONDENSED READING

A round-up of the latest photography books on the market



● **PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUES & EFFECTS** (ebook) by John Mason and Staff of ACS Distance Education, £22.95 This largely well-produced eBook dispenses plenty of tips that take you from understanding settings to where to sell your photographs. The illustrations are generally decent and it's all very readable. It's not really doing anything new, but the authors know what they're talking about.



● **THE ROADS TO SANTIAGO** by Derry Brabbs, £16.99 A pilgrimage across the vistas of France and Spain to the Shrine of St James at Santiago de Compostela, a tradition that has spanned a millennium, has enjoyed a renaissance in recent years. The photography of Derry Brabbs goes some way towards explaining why that is – the architecture and scenery on display are simply breathtaking.



● **WILD WALES CALENDAR 2014** by Jeremy Moore, £6.95 A selection of florid and diverse images of the countryside of Wales comprises this excellent calendar from Jeremy Moore. Wildlife and landscapes intermingle to create a balanced, seasonal view of the country, with the weather and conditions of each photo matching the month beside which it appears.

● **HOGAN: FUTURE ROOTS** by Donatella Sartorio and Ornella Sancassani, £50 Milan-based fashion brand Hogan celebrates its recent collections with photographic portraits of international designers and architects dressed up in their branded clobber. There is some nice portraiture on offer, and fashion fans will have plenty to pore over. This is definitely a book with niche appeal.

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Letters

Share your views and opinions with fellow AP readers every week

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Wins a 20-roll pack of 36-exposure Fujifilm Superia ISO 200 35mm film or a Fujifilm 8GB media card*



FUJIFILM

Write to...

'Letters' at the usual AP address (see page 3), fax to 020 3148 8130 or email to amateur.photographer@ipcmedia.com

*Please indicate whether you would like to receive Fujifilm film or a memory card (please state type preferred) and include your full postal address

Backchat

Send your thoughts or views (about 500 words) to 'Backchat' at the usual AP address (see page 3). A fee of £50 will be paid on publication



REKINDLED LOVE AFFAIR

While I still develop and print my own black & white photographs I have largely moved over to digital imaging for colour, mainly for convenience.

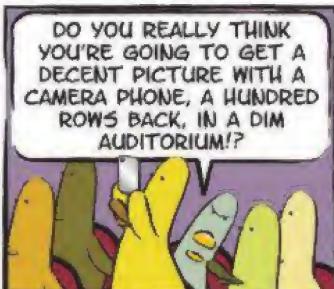
This fills me with guilt every time I look at my now disused Nikon F4, which, in my opinion, is one of the finest 35mm SLRs ever made. I have come close to selling it many times, but I can never quite bring myself to do it as it is still an amazing camera and one I had to save for ages to buy.

Recently, I was walking past the photographic printing and film-processing store Photographique in Bristol and couldn't resist the urge to go in. There, on the counter, was that most rare and wondrous of things – a fully stocked film fridge. It brought back many memories of happy days spent shooting Kodachrome 25 and more recently, Fujichrome Velvia. On a whim, I bought a couple of rolls of Velvia 50.

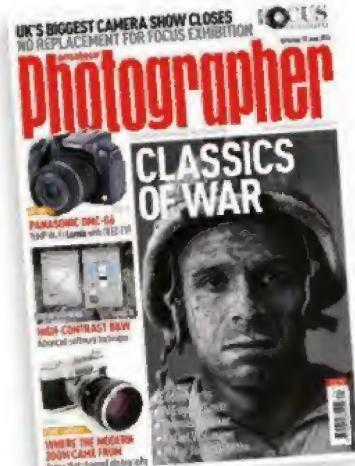
Back in North Yorkshire, I loaded up the Nikon F4 and went out for the day. It was a real joy not to look at a screen or to worry about histograms, but to think long and hard before pressing the cable release. Every frame was precious, and expensive, so I used the film carefully. I sent the films off to the lab and eagerly anticipated their return – another forgotten joy of film photography. And the results? Wow! There is just something amazing about the colours of Velvia, with the slight grain in large patches of colour having a painterly quality and it is beautifully sharp. I'm sure you can get a plug-in that does something very similar in a digital camera, but the joy of using something that is expensive but beautiful has rekindled my love affair with Velvia, and I've also lost the guilt about not using the F4 any more. **Dr Dean Waters, North Yorkshire**

I have a few guilt-inducing cameras myself, particularly my Nikon FM3a
– **Damien Demolder, Editor**

What The Duck



<http://www.whatttheduck.net/>



POWER OF PHOTOGRAPHY

The article *The Order of War* (AP 15 June) was a good, thoughtful read, and the image of the US soldier on the cover was quite haunting, especially the look in his eyes.

It reminded me of an almost life-sized photograph on display in one of the buildings in Auschwitz 1, of four little girls, aged about six or seven, on a sunny day, beaming for the camera, all of them naked. It looked so innocent, until you noticed the out-of-focus buildings and watchtower behind them. The caption read, as near as I can remember, 'Gypsy girls used for medical experiments.' I think this was the most profoundly disturbing image that I have ever seen and it surely demonstrated the power of photography if any image ever did. Perhaps that is the real purpose of war photography, to expose to the world the evil that man is capable of, and to stir the collective conscience.

Keith Longmore, Norfolk

TIME FOR A DSLR?

I have been enjoying AP for years, especially now, with its mix of film and digital. At 71 years old, it's been film for me since the age of 15, with my most creative being a Miranda DR with 135mm f/3.5 Soligor, preset. The next best was an Olympus AF-1 that I took around the world with me – twice. The DR has gone, but others remain.

I would really like to embrace digital technology, but a year ago along came an unused Miranda DX3, plus a selection of lenses. I still haven't used it, and am now thinking of selling it and going digital, but keeping my fixed-lens film cameras. I'd really welcome your views on what I am making into a quandary! **G Wickens, London SW17**

As nice as the DX3 is, it might well be time to get yourself a DSLR, but not necessarily a new one. Do keep the fixed-lens models, as they are fun to use. You might keep the Miranda DR, too, as you won't get much for it
– **Damien Demolder, Editor**

ALL AT SEA

The converted fishing boat was crashing through white horses on a hot sunlit Mediterranean afternoon as we headed for the old leper colony island of Spinalonga, which my wife and I planned to visit during

the recent half-term holiday on Crete.

I especially wanted to get some unusual angles of the old Venetian fort with my Panasonic Lumix DMC-LX5, which was well wrapped up as the salt-laden spray showered over us in the brilliant light. Through the foamy showers I noticed a keen photographer in the prow of the boat with his uncovered Olympus bridge camera pointed into the waves, oblivious to the briny blows seemingly aimed at him.

Eventually we landed on the island and attempted to recover ourselves from this nautical experience when I noticed our friend cleaning down his wet camera, which had partly dried by this time leaving a salt-encrusted film in the lens. This he noticed and immediately tried to remove with a finger pushed well into the surface. Not satisfied with this initial attempt at cleaning, he then lifted the bottom of his sweat-stained T-shirt and swirled it round the front element. Perhaps the resulting misty images will have added to his attempt to capture the atmosphere of this fascinating place. So much for sympathetic lens care.

Paul Nott, Cheshire

GEM OF A BARGAIN

In AP 11 May, technical editor Richard Sibley asked in the AP readers' poll 'Would you ever consider buying a used DSLR?' Having bought a mint-condition second-hand Canon EOS-1D Mark II N some three years ago, I answered yes.

In a recent AP I saw an advertisement for a Konica Minolta Dynax 7D, one of my favourite mid-range cameras, and decided to take a chance – even though it was sold at the bargain basement end of the market 'as seen' with two dead pixels.

Well, what came out of the box was as

close to mint as any nine-year-old camera has a right to be. It also came with a grip, a lens and spare batteries. I tested it at Kew Gardens in Surrey and everything worked perfectly. The supposedly dead pixels were just hot at ISO 800 and I don't even have to update my old version of Photoshop to read the raw files! I will give it a sterner test at the Mini Festival at Brands Hatch in Kent soon, but I'm not expecting it to fail.

I think buying second-hand is a great way to acquire something you may not have been able to afford when it was new. And sometimes you may, like me, end up with a real gem. **Richard Bushby, email**

NOT FOR CHANGING

In the next few weeks I will be 70. One gift to myself is a new laptop computer to replace my Sony Vaio, which lasted 13 years. And I still use my Ferrograph reel-to-reel tape recorder, which, although 50 years old, is in mint condition – it even has the same valves. My four Nikon F5s are workhorses that have never been serviced, yet still give images on a daily basis for my professional nautical work.

My mobile phone fits into my top pocket and has large numbers on it and no camera. There is a great family-run camera shop in Bognor Regis in West Sussex that deals with all my requirements and still processes film to a high standard.

Last, but not least, I still read AP, as I have done for 53 years when I worked at Kodak as a photographer in the colour show team. At times I used to read it late at night at Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club (between sets) when he and Pete King ran the club! I even took some of my first transparencies there!

For some of us, the times are not for changing! **John Periam, West Sussex**

STORAGE SOLUTION

I have developed my own solution to digital filing. When my memory card has about 240 shots on it, I insert it in my photo printer and make index sheets containing around 80 images. I then file these sheets into a ring binder. The memory card is then filed in a custom-made box akin to a colour slide box. Both the sheets and memory card are given a reference number. This means I can quickly retrieve my images for printing or for email.

This runs alongside 'special job filing' in Nikon Picture Project, and as I have neither the time nor the interest in post-production editing any such work is done by experts at my local pro lab.

At present I am engaged in printing some of my old negatives going back to 1948. The above picture was taken in 1952 on a Box Brownie during a camping trip with friends to the New Forest in Hampshire. That's me on the left. **Peter Cox, Dorset**

Saving memory cards is a neat and straightforward way of doing things, just as we did when we all shot film. However, memory cards are made for reusing. An organised folder system on an external hard drive works out cheaper, though – Damien Demolder, Editor

BACK CHAT

AP reader Martin Johnson does a little soul searching about missing those once-in-a-lifetime shots

LINDA McCartney once said to her daughter Mary: 'It's in your soul camera' when Mary was upset about missing a particular shot. Such is the way with photography, and I'd be willing to bet that even Henri Cartier-Bresson had plenty of 'soul-camera' moments. But Linda's advice to her daughter did set me thinking: why do we get so uptight about missing that 'once-in-a-lifetime' shot? What is it in human nature that drives us to record everything we see?

The most obvious reason is to record special memories of people, places and events, so that we can look back on and enjoy them in years to come. Of course, there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. Humans have been recording what they see around them for millennia; from fantastic cave-paintings and Aboriginal art to the works of Turner and Constable, and then, when photography came along, through the medium of the camera. With the advent of digital photography, smartphones and the ability to share images immediately, there are now even more opportunities to record every aspect of our lives.

Photography, like painting, brings the wonders of the natural world to us, showing us places or images of wildlife that we might never get to see ourselves. However, I do wonder whether in the race to get that photograph of the animal or view before us, that we lose 'the moment' and whole experience of what we are seeing. In other words, the whole technical process of photography gets in the way of simply just enjoying what is in front of us.

My favourite 'soul-camera' moment was 12 years ago during a holiday on Ardnamurchan in Scotland. My wife and I had stopped to have our picnic lunch and enjoy the view over Loch Sunart, when, all of a sudden we saw a dark shape moving in the water below us. Sandwiches were quickly put down and binoculars grabbed. Sure enough, there was an otter – our first one in the wild – following the shoreline, diving for food, surfacing and then swimming along on his back, enjoying his catch. It was magical. We watched him, entranced, for ages, until finally he disappeared from view.

Because of the distance he was from us, any photographs we might have taken would have been useless: the otter would merely have been a black dot – that could have been anything – somewhere at the bottom the photograph, rather than something we could have looked at in years to come to remind us of a special moment.

But the important thing is: that day is still as clear in our memory as the day it happened. We can picture the scene as if it were yesterday; it is in our 'soul camera'. There's no need for a photograph.



© Peter Cox



PHOTO INSIGHT

BRINGING
YOU ESSENTIAL
EXPERT ADVICE
EVERY WEEK



ANDREW SANDERSON

A renowned photographer, tutor, author and Ilford Master Printer, Andrew Sanderson offers practical tips on working with film and traditional darkroom techniques

I TOOK the black & white image (right) while I was working on my book *Home Photography: Inspiration on your Doorstep*. At that time, I was doing a lot of simple observations around the house. I had set up my MPP 5x4in camera and was photographing the circular breadboard you can see in this set-up.

I did some shots with various kitchen utensils placed on it, trying cheese graters, sieves and other objects, to see what would work best. I was originally drawn to the carved word 'Bread' around the edge, which was worn and full of character. I shot the board with the letters in the foreground, but the rest of the board was an empty space. To add more interest to the composition, I introduced a pear from a fruit bowl and got in close, positioning the fruit just above the letters on the breadboard. I shot a colour Polaroid and really liked the result.

I then did a shot of the pear on its own, standing upright, lighting it from above with an Anglepoise lamp. Most people have these angled desk lamps at home, which goes to show that you don't need fancy lighting set-ups to achieve professional results.

I placed the pear near the top of the frame and used the breadboard as an area of light tone to set it off. I like the effect that this causes: the partly seen circular area looks like the pear is standing in a circle of light, as if it is on stage.

I took another Polaroid to see the result. I stood the Polaroid up to look at it, resting it against a low shelf behind the work surface, then I looked at the pear and the photograph together to see how well the Polaroid had represented it. Immediately I got the idea to shoot them together. In the final shot it looks as though the pear is either looking at itself in a mirror, or it is admiring a picture of itself. The title is 'Pear and Polaroid', but the subtitle is 'A nice Pear'.

In the second of the two images shown

If you would like to read more about paper negatives, Andrew's book *Paper Negative Photography* is available from www.blurb.com, price £15.



'In the final shot it looks as though the pear is either looking at itself in a mirror, or it is admiring a picture of itself'

here (left), I have hand-coloured the pear image to draw attention to parts of it and to enhance the image further. Hand-colouring is a process almost as old as photography itself and involves adding colour back into a black & white print.

In AP 2 March, I wrote about my favourite techniques for hand-colouring black & white prints. There are lots of ways to approach this process, which I have covered in my book *Hand Colouring and Alternative Darkroom Processes*.

In the meantime, if you want to give hand-colouring a try, start by deciding how you are going to colour your black & white print. You can use dyes, photo oils, felt pens, food colouring or pencils, as I did here, for the least messy option. Although there are advantages and disadvantages to each method, pencils are great for beginners. Be warned, though, that they will only work with matt or semi-matt papers, and as the pencil lies on the surface of the paper they can obscure some detail in the image.

Before you start, use a paper towel to

place on the print where your hand will lie while you're colouring. This will make sure that your hand does not leave a mark on the image as you work. It is also best to test the coloured pencils on scrap paper before applying them to the image in order to see the hue. Finally, remember to start lightly, building up the colour. You can always add more colour later, but you can't take it away!

These days, not everyone uses hand colouring to achieve colour-accurate results, but if that is the effect you are after, make sure you work in daylight. Try to use a mixture of tones where one colour is concentrated, such as in this pear. Be aware that highlights will require less colour and shadows more for a 3D final effect.

For those who want a more detailed explanation, you can find my Hand Colouring a Black and White Print video on YouTube to help you create your very own 'pear' of photos, like this! **AP**

Andrew Sanderson was talking to Debbie Allen

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BEHIND THE SCENES

I SPENT five days in Glen Coe in the Highlands of Scotland last summer,' says Gillman. 'I drove past this scene a few times, always noticing its potential, but the light was never quite right to justify the walk to it. I wanted a partially cloudy day so I could wait for the foreground trees to pop with sunlight and have them contrasted against the darker mountain.'

'On the last day the weather turned that way, so I braved the midges and walked some way to set up. Once framed, it was really a case of waiting. I knew exactly in my head from days before how I wanted it to look, and eventually I got my wish and managed the shot. The light was particularly bright and blue, and I had to use a 0.9 graduated filter to even come close to keeping the sky from blowing out.'

Recipe for success



Proving that it's not just professionals capable of creating stunning images, AP reader **Martin Gillman** explains how his photography takes place in the head, with the camera being just a tool. He talks to **Debbi Allen**

LOOKING at the photographs that illustrate this article, you'd be forgiven for thinking they were taken by a professional photographer. However, Martin Gillman is a business development manager for an engineering product company by day, and an amateur photographer in his free time.

Martin is an avid reader of *Amateur Photographer*. 'AP gives me the news, the goss, the gear and even the politics,' he says. While Martin specialises in landscapes and fashion, he says he is still finding his photographic self. 'I am drawn towards landscape, I toy with fashion, but I feel strongly drawn to editorial and street these days too,' he says. 'I like telling stories.'

STARTING AFRESH

Although Martin embarked on his photographic journey in his youth, he didn't pursue his hobby seriously. Like most amateurs, he is honest about his skills when he started out. 'I was awful back then,' he says. 'I used a tiny cheap 110 camera and took lots of blurry shots of wildlife that had bolted long before I hit the shutter. Yet I was attracted by both the art and the technical side, and the complexity of the cameras themselves interested me.'

It wasn't until he returned to photography seven years ago, when he bought a Nikon D40X, that the photography bug really bit. Martin decided to pursue his photographic passion by putting himself through a diploma in photography, to get a handle on the basics of the craft.

'That served me well,' he says. 'I then went on to start a BA Hons in photography on a correspondence basis.' However, like most amateur photographers, holding down a job and family life left little time for education. 'I finished the first year, but I could no longer find the eight hours a week to continue study and had to pack it up,' he adds.

Having gained a huge amount of knowledge about composition and the art of photography during that year, Martin says that education has, without doubt, done more for him than any piece of kit has.

Speaking of kit, Martin's kit bag holds a few items to make most amateurs drool, including a Nikon D800 and a Fujifilm XE-1. 'They are a fine pair of machines,' he says. 'I also have a few 35mm film bodies, but those are just for fun and nostalgia.'

In fact, Martin is so happy with his current camera set-up that he admits to not wanting anything





ALL PICTURES © MARTIN GILLMAN



 else. 'I am happy with what I have,' he explains. 'I do believe in the old saying that the best camera you have is the one in your hand. One day you wake up and realise that the photography is happening in your head, and while the camera in your hands is the tool, and it should be good, it is just a tool.'

DREAMING BIG

While most photographers start out shooting for fun and for the love of their hobby, for some, their thoughts turn to ambitions of selling their images and turning professional. However, Martin is still wrestling with that decision. 'I'd rather be a good amateur than a mediocre professional,' he says.

Martin takes his photographs for the same

reasons most amateurs do. 'I enjoy the creation of something unique – something that, although it was there for all to see and to capture, perhaps has been captured in "my way",' he says. 'It's a print of my personality in many ways, an output; it flowed into me and out of me. I think I'm quite spiritual about my photography and it means a lot to me.'

That's not to say Martin is happy standing still, as he likes a challenge. 'I want to get noticed, it's that simple,' he says. 'I don't need recognition to stroke any part of an ego, but I do as a marker of my progress. I want to know if I am getting better, if I am doing it right and if I should continue.'

And his philosophy is working for him. Martin has sold some of his images through stock sites like Getty Images and Vogue

Top: 'Cheddar Goats'
Nikon D600,
50mm, 1/500sec
at f/8

Above left:
'Derwent'
Nikon D700,
24–70mm, 1sec
(multiple exposure)
at f/22

Art + Commerce, as well as having had photographs published in fashion magazines. 'I have done a few magazine shoots in lower-end fashion titles, including shooting published covers,' he says.

Ultimately, though, as an amateur, Martin gets to shoot what he loves, rather than what someone else wants him to. 'For me, I like to sell the images as they are rather than shoot what is in someone else's head or agenda,' he says. 'I like that freedom and am lucky enough to have it. However, who knows what the future will bring as I am constantly evolving.'

LANDSCAPE KNOW-HOW
Specialising in landscapes and portraits, Martin needs to be able to switch between



Above: 'The First Tree'
Nikon D700,
20-35mm,
1/60sec at f/16

Above right:
'Stormlight'
Nikon D800,
24-70mm,
1/60sec at f/22

techniques depending on what he's shooting. He says he is able to do this by keeping 'common threads' between the two genres. 'With portrait photography, I want to tell the viewer something about the sitter, while in landscapes I want people to see it how I saw it. So one is outwardly descriptive and the other inwardly. When it comes to making the image, I am a natural-light fan. There is something about artificial light, no matter how well it is done, that doesn't convince me. I need to believe an image for it to work for me.'

In terms of editing, Martin insists less is more. 'I try to keep editing to an absolute minimum,' he explains. 'I enjoy the challenge of getting most things in-camera, which is the best bit for me. In a landscape, I may

add a digital grad into the sky or even foreground to help with tonal balance or dodge and burn – especially in mono versions to get some added "pop". In a portrait I will just tidy up.'

Creating his stunning landscapes means that much of Martin's time off work is spent on the road, scouting for new and exciting locations. 'I love to drive and explore,' he says. 'I like to avoid the obvious places. I like to discover the odd tree or feature in an otherwise bland vista and make something of that small section. I often shoot landscapes at 200mm.'

Finding his own style has brought Martin some form of recognition, but he still tries to keep his techniques fluid and keep evolving his skills. 'I like the low-sun hours and a backlit tree at sundown, but I keep myself free from routines and methods,' he says. 'If the light isn't right, look around you, as there will be a spot in shade or part shade that will be interesting. I'm a very spontaneous shooter.'

Having dabbled in wedding photography, stating, 'It's too fussy, too rushed and it doesn't inspire me,' Martin is looking for his next photographic challenge. 'The world is a huge place,' he says. 'In my military days I travelled extensively, without a camera, and to go to some of those places again, good and bad, would be a dream. To document some of the terror I experienced, as well as the beauty back then, would have left me quite a portfolio. However, I'm sure it all influences me now. A free trip to Namibia is, of course, welcome should you need me!' **AP**

- Do you want to see your pictures in print and share your photographic journey and experiences with other readers? Send up to ten low-resolution JPEGs and a short covering letter on an email titled 'Reader profile' to AP@pcmedia.com, or post a CD/DVD to Reader Profiles at the usual address, and you could see your work published in AP.



PICKING A FAVOURITE

OF ALL his photographs, Martin Gillman says he struggles to pick a favourite. However, when pushed he says he currently likes his shot of West Bay beach in Dorset (above).

'I probably make less than six photographs a year that I feel really proud of,' he reveals. 'My current favourite is this rather simple shot. I sat waiting to capture walkers and passers-by from one viewpoint, purposefully keeping a really simple composition and letting those who entered it make the story. At one point a small dog entered my frame and I hit the shutter just as he stopped to look at me. It's a shot with a lot of great tones, simplicity, good geometry and a touch of comedy.'

As well as learning his craft from his education, Gillman has attended a number of workshops, which he says have helped guide his skills. 'I read a lot, I study the classics a lot and try to attend courses where I can,' he says. 'I have spent time with Charlie Waite in the field and also been critiqued by AP Editor Damien Demolder.'

So what is Gillman's advice to fellow amateurs looking to progress their own photography? 'Learn your craft, practise, practise then practise some more,' he says. 'Then study the best, both classic and contemporary. Truly understand how a great photograph is made. Oh – and get off internet forums and get behind your camera, walk the walk.'

To see more of Martin Gillman's images, visit www.martingillman.co.uk or join his Facebook or Twitter followers at www.facebook.com/gillmanphotography or twitter: @gillmanphoto

The UK's most prestigious competition for amateur photographers



Bill Sell Carmarthen 46pts

Fujifilm X10, 23.7mm, 1/500sec at f/8, ISO 400
Red door **Judges say** Sometimes during the judging process a shot just leaps out at us right away. Bill's brilliant interpretation of the brief is definitely one of those shots. The strong red against the deep black is a such a striking sight that we couldn't help but award Bill first place in this round

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APOY 2013

Amateur Photographer OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

Interior Architecture

We had some great entries for the fourth round of APOY 2013. We reveal the top 30 photographs from our **Interior Architecture** round

Bill Sell, of Carmarthen, is the winner of our Interior Architecture round of APOY 2013. Bill will receive a Panasonic Lumix DMC-G5 with Lumix G Vario 14-42mm f/3.5-5.6 Asph Mega OIS and Leica DG Summilux 25mm f/1.4 Asph lenses worth £1,347.98. The G5 is a digital single-lens mirrorless camera with a 16.05-million-pixel, four thirds, Live MOS sensor. It has 6fps high-speed continuous shooting, a 3in, 920,000-dot articulated LCD touchscreen, and a 1.44-million-dot EVF. The Leica DG Summilux 25mm f/1.4 Asph lens has a bright f/1.4 maximum aperture that provides superb image quality with minimum distortion, plus a beautiful soft focus.

Our second-placed winner is **Helen Groumas**, of Berlin in Germany, who will receive a Panasonic Lumix DMC-LX7 worth £469.99. This high-spec compact camera has a 10.1-million-pixel High-Sensitivity MOS sensor, f/1.4-2.3 (24-90mm equivalent) Leica Vario-Summilux lens and full manual control.

Ian Butterworth, of Wetherby in West Yorkshire, finished third in the round and wins a Panasonic Lumix DMC-XS1 (in white) worth £119.99. Panasonic claims that the 16.1-million-pixel XS1 has the world's slimmest body profile, and it's certainly skinny with a 14mm-deep body. Its 5x optical zoom with 24mm ultra-wideangle lens and tiny form make the XS1 the ultimate carry-it-with-you-everywhere camera.

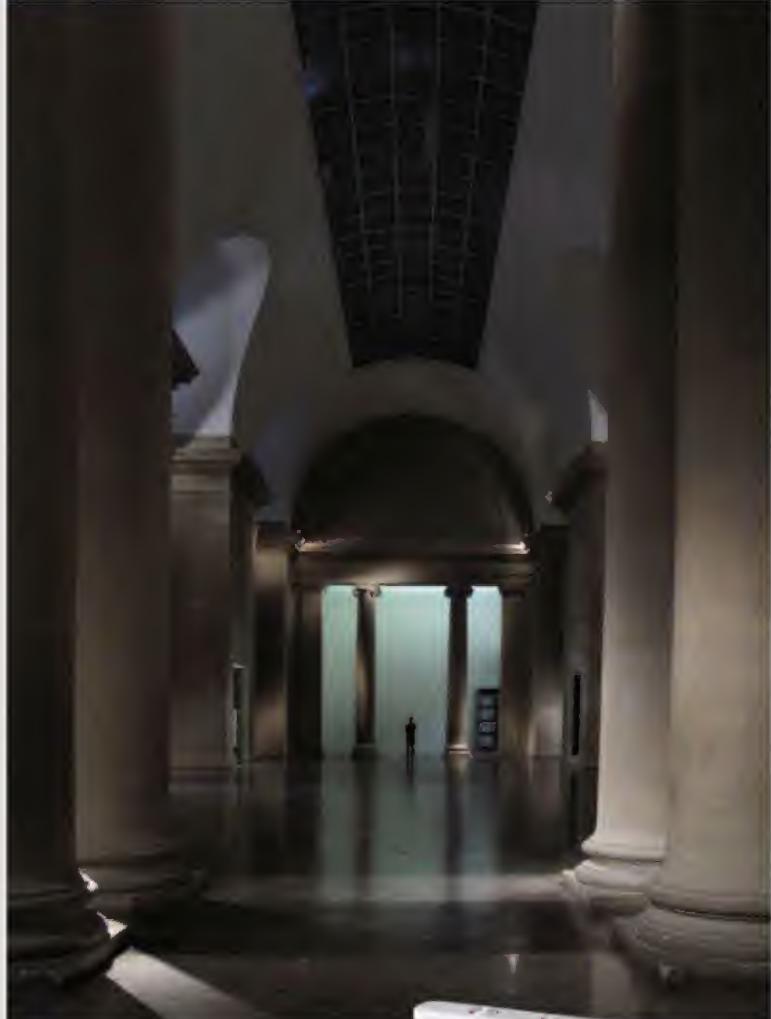
THE 2013 LEADER BOARD

The end of Round 4's judging sees some interesting changes to the leader board. Mikhail Kapychka has remained in first place after sweeping into the lead last round. However, Aaron Yeoman has moved up an impressive five places to second. Adrian Sadlier remains in third place.

1	Mikhail Kapychka	112pts	6	Gary Burrows	82pts
2	Aaron Yeoman	109pts	7	George Fisk	79pts
3	Adrian Sadlier	105pts	8	Sean Slevin	76pts
4	Dan Deakin	103pts	9	Julian Fraser	74pts
5	Dusica Paripovic	98pts	10	Nigel Farmer	72pts

2nd PRIZE

Helen Groumas Germany 45pts
Olympus OM-D EM-5, 20mm, 1/4000sec at f/2.2, ISO 1600
◆ 'Town in Box' Judges say Like Bill's shot, Helen's image has a truly distinctive look. Every element of this shot works. The person, the camera position and the tonal range are great. It's a very rewarding image



3rd PRIZE

Ian Butterworth West Yorkshire 44pts
Canon PowerShot G12, 1/8sec at f/3.2, ISO 400
◆ Duveen Gallery Judges say We awarded Ian third place because of the quiet and reflective atmosphere of his image. Its tranquil nature appealed to the judges, but more than that it's a confidently composed and nicely lit image and a more than worthy third place

The UK's most prestigious competition for amateur photographers

4 Aidan McCarthy London **43pts**
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 10-24mm, 1/12sec at f/4, ISO 100
Hotel at night Judges say This was one of the more unusual shots we had. It's perfectly exposed to capture the saturated blue neon of the staircase at the Andels Hotel in Lodz, Poland

5 Aaron Yeoman Hertfordshire **42pts**
Sony Alpha 700, 8mm fisheye, 1/5sec at f/8, ISO 100
'Cascade' Judges say This high-contrast image from Aaron makes good use of a relatively slow shutter speed to communicate the lively atmosphere of City Hall in London

6 Sean Slevin Ireland **41pts**
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 28mm, 0.5secs at f/22, ISO 100
'Zero' Judges say This stark, minimalist shot of a stainless-steel lift door in a shopping centre that never opened benefits from its unusual floor-level camera angle

7 Ronald de Boer Spain **40pts**
Canon EOS 400D, 10-22mm, 1/25sec at f/3.5, ISO 400
Abandoned house Judges say Texture and colour come together to create a simple but visually stimulating look at ruined architecture

8 Charles Spencer North Yorkshire **39pts**
Olympus E-30, 40-150mm, 1/1600sec at f/7.1, ISO 3200
'Pickering Station Roof' Judges say Charles did well to capture this beautifully exposed abstract shot of Pickering Station roof shrouded in steam

9 Gary Smith Essex **38pts**
Nikon D40, 10-20mm, 1/60sec at f/5, ISO 200
Natural History Museum Judges say Gary has waited for the perfect moment to capture this image. The monochrome really helps emphasise the strong shaft of sunlight illuminating the room

10 Rob Cochran Somerset **37pts**
Canon EOS 40D, 16-35mm, 1/400sec at f/8, ISO 100
'Bridge the Gap' Judges say Just by angling the camera up, Rob has revealed the interaction between the muted colours of the architecture and graphic shapes of the bridge and skylight

11 Dan Deakin Nottingham **36pts**
Nikon D700, 16-35mm, 1/20sec at f/6.3, ISO 1600
Spiralling down Judges say The overall winner of APOY 2012 delivers a nicely lit and vivid interpretation of a common theme

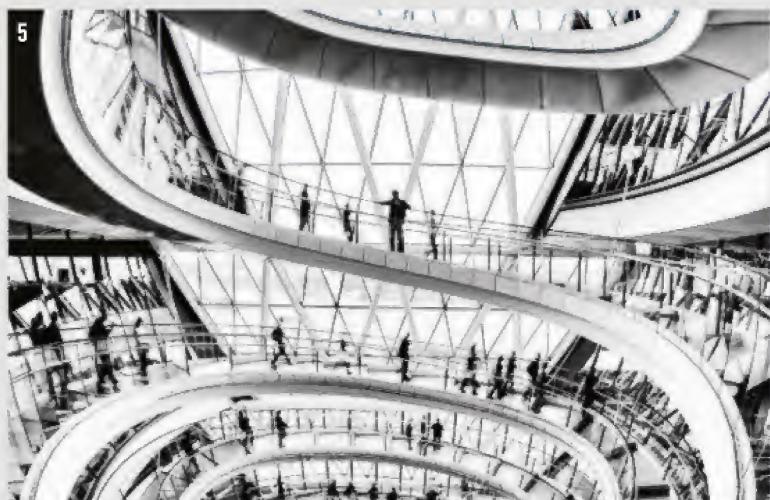
12 George Fisk Kent **36pts**
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 24-105mm, 1/250sec at f/11, ISO 250
'Shadows' Judges say George demonstrates how light and monochrome can create atmosphere. The shadows are a strong compositional element

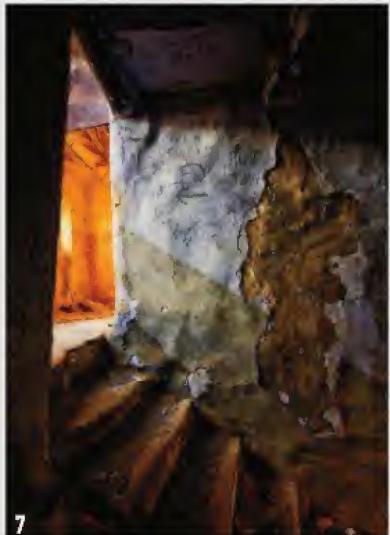
13 Arthur Asyanin Russia **35pts**
Nikon D80, 10-20mm, 1/1000sec at f/4, ISO 400
Looking up Judges say Arthur has angled his camera up to capture his image. The colours are genuinely striking. It's a great find

14 Nigel Farmer Berkshire **34pts**
Nikon D90, 10-20mm, 4secs at f/22, ISO 200
Car park Judges say Nigel's image is eerie yet oddly inviting as the arrow leads us into unknown territories

15 Zoltan Kovacs Hungary **33pts**
Pentax K10D, 50mm, 1/320sec at f/8, ISO 100
Morning sun Judges say Zoltan's image is an imaginative interpretation of the brief. It's perfectly timed and a joy to look at

16 Dusica Paripovic Bosnia and Herzegovina **32pts**
Nikon D5000, 18-55mm, 1/20sec at f/3.5, ISO 100
Tower Judges say Dusica is a regular contributor to APOY and here delivers a truly striking and dizzying view from the bottom of a tower structure





7



8



9



10



11



12



13



14



15



16

The UK's most prestigious competition for amateur photographers

17 Eloisa Garnica USA

Olympus SP-800UZ, 10mm, 1/160sec at f/3.6, ISO 50

Smithsonian Judges say By excluding all extraneous elements, Eloisa has created an image with fascinating shapes and curves

31pts



17

18 Jolyon Hillier Dorset

Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100, 10.43mm, 1/15sec at f/2.8, ISO 125

Underpass Judges say Jolyon has controlled the contrasting light well to deliver a balanced exposure of an underpass. We love the feeling of emptiness it conveys

31pts



18

19 Richard Cooper Hampshire

30pts

Panasonic Lumix DMC-GX1, 32mm, 1/30sec at f/4, ISO 1600

Tate escalators Judges say Reflections and silhouettes work well together here. The end result is busy, but it's also fascinating

20 David Staveley Suffolk

29pts

Panasonic Lumix DMC-FZ18, 4.2-82.8mm, 1/4sec at f/2.8

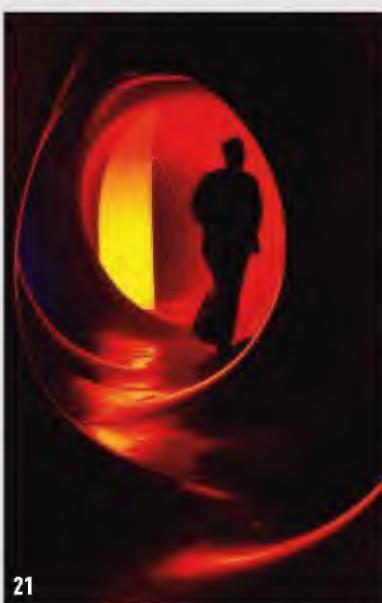
Office corridor Judges say Looking right down the barrel of this corridor has allowed David to accentuate the garish colours

21 Jim Young Hampshire

28pts

Nikon D800, 28-300mm, 1/10sec at f/6.3, ISO 3200

Luminarium Judges say This image really stood out. It's a creative interpretation of the brief that makes terrific use of colour



21



22

23 Peter Chinnock Surrey

28pts

Canon EOS 450D, 18mm, 1/4sec at f/3.5, ISO 200

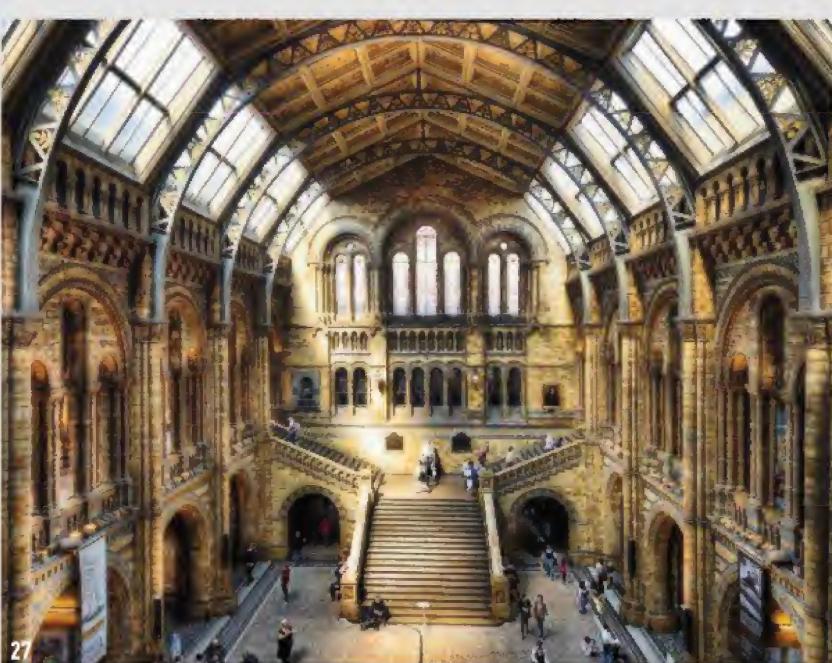
'The Memory Void' Judges say Peter made the most of an unusual location, using an off-kilter angle to emphasise the strangeness

24 Claire Cooper Hampshire

27pts

Canon PowerShot S90, 6mm, 1/30sec at f/2, ISO 200

Church pillar Judges say Claire's framing is what makes this image work, with the pillar extruding from the bottom-left corner



27

25 Graham Hutton Dorset

26pts

Panasonic Lumix DMC-GF1, 20mm, 5secs at f/10, ISO 100

Galway Cathedral Judges say Another creative use of a floor-level angle, Graham's interpretation of a church evokes a sense of awe

26 Adrian Sadlier Dublin

25pts

Nikon D80, 18-135mm, 1/15sec at f/5.6, ISO 800

'Fading Glories' Judges say We enjoyed Adrian's image of a dilapidated convent. He makes excellent use of natural daylight

27 Diogo Ferreira Portugal

24pts

Olympus OM-D E-M5, 12-50mm, 1/20sec at f/7.1, 5 exposures, ISO 200

Natural History Museum Judges say Diogo's HDR image has a gorgeously rich tone to it. The light just pours in from the top

28 Melvyn Price Nottinghamshire

24pts

Fujifilm FinePix HS10, 28mm, 1/60sec at f/32, ISO 200

Manchester Art Gallery Judges say Melvyn's sharp eye has spotted this shot among some fairly ordinary stairs. Excellent work

29 Shane Butler West Midlands

23pts

Canon EOS 1000D, 28-135mm, 1/10sec at f/7.1, ISO 1600

Leading nowhere Judges say The intersecting lines in different directions make for a complex but rewarding shot

30 Steve Thomas Buckinghamshire

22pts

Nikon F5, 35mm, 1/8sec at f/5.6, Fujifilm Fujicolor Reala

Pembroke Castle Judges say Steve's slightly off-centre positioning is what makes this image so interesting

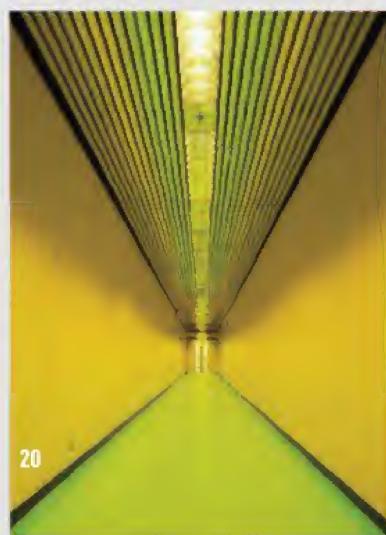
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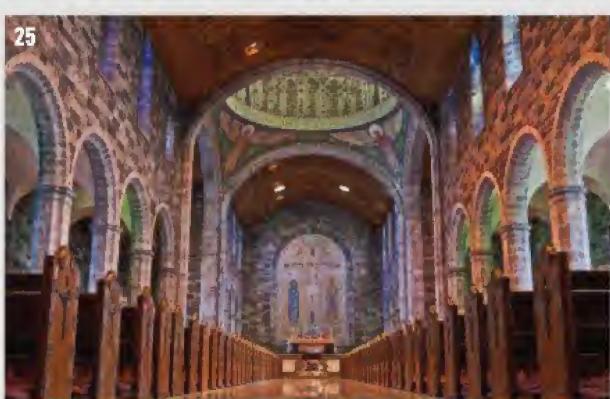
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Fujifilm Create Photobooks

With the **Fujifilm Create** Photobook service, you can make your own stunning photobooks that will last a lifetime

WHETHER you want to create a wedding album, collate a portfolio, make your own coffee-table book of your landscapes or simply compile your holiday photographs, photobooks are the perfect solution.

However, with so many different services to choose from it can be a daunting task – and you want the best quality available.

Whatever your reason for creating a photobook, the Fujifilm Create service gives you the tools you need to produce your own hardcover book. Better still, each Fujifilm Create Photobook is made from the same high-quality materials that Fujifilm uses to create photographic prints.

THE PHOTOBOKS

Fujifilm Create Photobooks are available in 20x20cm, 30x30cm, A4 (28.5x19.5cm) and A3 (43.5x29.5cm) sizes, in a choice of a lustre or gloss finish. Each book

comes with a fully wrapped photographic cover, and a coating that offers protection against fingerprints.

However, the unique selling point of the books is the material they are printed on. Fujifilm Photobooks are printed onto a silver-halide emulsion, which is the same Crystal Archive technology that Fujifilm has used for years to print photographs. This ensures that the images in the book have a rich gamut of colours, and are capable of reproducing subtle hues of blues, green and reds. It also ensures that whites are bright and clean, giving images a good level of contrast.

The paper used for the books has been specially developed for photobook manufacturing. It is slightly thinner than standard photographic paper, so when it



is bonded together it still bends, making it easy to turn each page without creasing the corners.

Another feature that makes the Fujifilm Create Photobooks stand out is the Leporello binding. This involves each spread in the book being created from a single sheet of paper and then carefully bonded to the preceding and following spreads. The result is that you can print an image across a whole spread, with no stitches down the middle of your images, and each spread, whether at the beginning, centre or end of your book, lies completely flat.

DO IT YOURSELF

You can produce your own Fujifilm Create Photobook via the Fujifilm Create website at www.fujifilmcreate.co.uk. The process is simplicity itself, and once you have registered you can upload your images quickly and easily. Images can be organised into virtual albums, which can then be used as the base for different book projects. Each project is saved online for 60 days so you

Top: Four different sizes of Fujifilm Create Photobook are available

Above: The Leporello binding ensures that each spread lies flat



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Damien Demolder

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As well as standard white & black pages, there are a number of different themes to choose from. With the background theme chosen and your images selected, the Fujifilm Create Photobook software will automatically place your photographs on the pages in the book, choosing an appropriate page layout that will fit the number of pages you want the book to be. If you don't like the layout, simply select a different one and add more pages if you need to. You can add text to narrate or title your images, and even add borders.

The whole process is straightforward and you can customise your Fujifilm Create Photobook as much or as little as you like.

With simple-to-use software that guides you through every step, it is easy to create your own Fujifilm Create Photobook

AMATEUR Photographer and Fujifilm have teamed up to offer one lucky reader the chance to win a photographic tutorial with Damien Demolder, Editor of *Amateur Photographer* and photographic tutor.

The lucky reader will spend a day in London with Damien learning skills that will improve their photographic technique and style. After learning 'on the go' with expert guidance throughout, the winner will receive editing advice and a critique of the photos taken, which will help them to

identify, improve and create future images with a new, inspired perspective.

With the day's shooting finished and the photos edited, Damien will then assist the winner in structuring and designing their own stunning Fujifilm Create Photobook, displaying the best pictures from their day out.

In addition, the winner will also receive credit for a further Fujifilm Create Photobook to create their own book of memories.

PLUS! 3 runner-up prizes

Three lucky runners-up will receive credit so they can create their own A3-sized Fujifilm Create Photobook. Use the book to create your own portfolio of images, or to show off the best images you have taken this summer.



HOW TO ENTER

All you have to do to be in with a chance of winning one of these fantastic prizes is visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/fujibook and upload your best landscape photograph.

The competition closes on 27 July 2013, and the winner and runners-up will be chosen and informed via email by 10 August. For full terms and conditions, visit the website at www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/fujibook.

FUJIFILM

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A relative holds up a photo of a martyr killed during the civil war in Libya, 2011



A truthful eye

Despite the growth of new media, **Riccardo Venturi** believes that photojournalism plays a vital role in our understanding of the world. He talks to **David Clark** about his work

PHOTOJOURNALISTS are widely admired for their skill and bravery in reporting on wars, natural disasters and other life-threatening situations, but the market for their work has declined in recent decades. Newspapers and magazines are reluctant to commission photographers to report on serious issues when lighter, often celebrity-driven content sells more copies.

However, despite the reduced opportunities, there is lots of good news work being done by determined photojournalists who often put their lives on the line to report on events.

One of the most successful and prolific photojournalists working today is the 47-year-old Italian Riccardo Venturi. His 25-year career has included coverage of a wide range of news events, from wars



Above: an anti-government rebel on the frontline in Libya, 2011, seen through the semi-transparent material of a flag
Left: Victims of the revolution in Libya are commemorated in a cemetery in Benghazi, 2011

in Afghanistan and Kosovo to ongoing stories about medical or social issues.

However, rather than working on lots of individual news stories, Venturi prefers to cover stories in-depth – a method that means the photographer is able to spend vital time getting to the heart of his stories.

'I try to cover the main news in the areas that interest me most, such as Africa, the Middle East and Asia,' he says. 'Sometimes I also cover big events worldwide, such as the recent earthquake in Haiti. My working method is to cover the news and its aftermath, and I try to work on mid or long-term projects that can best portray full stories.'



ALL PHOTOS © RICCARDO VENTURI/REDUX

BACKGROUND

Venturi has always had a strong interest in social issues, as well as a healthy curiosity about the world and a love of travel. For him, photography is primarily about recording and understanding events, and from the outset his ambition was to become a photojournalist.

He took up photography when he was 20 and his work was encouraged and inspired by his study of previous generations of photojournalists. 'I believe that photography is like a family in which the young photographer has to know the work of the father before him, so I began by studying the masters

of photography and their images,' he says. 'Among the photojournalists, I was mostly inspired by the Anglo-American school, for example Don McCullin and W Eugene Smith.'

Venturi's first assignment was reporting on the Italian university protests and occupations of 1989 and it was published as a cover story in the prominent Italian weekly magazine *L'Espresso*. After this successful start, he gained experience in the field by working for a photo agency in Rome for some years and carried out projects on diverse subjects, including illegal immigration and the rise of neo-Nazi movements in 1990s Germany.

'I believe that photography is like a family in which the young photographer has to know the work of the father before him'

WAR REPORTING

Venturi's first real experience of war photography came when he went to cover the war in Afghanistan in 1996, when the Taliban took control of Kabul. He says he thought that this would be his only piece of war reportage, but his work was very successful and it won him a World Press Photo award in 1997. It led to more war-

 related work, including reporting on conflicts in Somalia, the Gaza Strip, Sierra Leone and Libya.

He is well aware of the dangers his work entails, but accepts that they are part of his job. 'Of course, I have encountered risky situations several times and I am always concerned about my safety,' he says. 'In general, I try to avoid unnecessary risks, but I accept the idea that a war zone can put your life in danger. After having witnessed so many deaths, I have developed a greater acceptance of it.'

As well as his war work, Venturi has also worked with humanitarian agencies by providing powerful pictures for their campaigns. They have included a project on the spread of tuberculosis for the World Health Organisation and one on work-related deaths and accidents for the Italian organisation ANMIL, which works to represent victims of these accidents. Since 2001 he has been represented by the

prestigious Italian photo agency Contrasto.

In addition to selling Venturi's images for publication, the agency also provides official documents and letters of introduction and authorisation to help him get access to specific places while he's on assignment. However, when Venturi is 'in the field', it's his responsibility to find the local contacts and 'fixers' who can help him to understand what's happening on the ground and be in the right place at the right time.

STYLE AND CONTENT

Although a few of Venturi's projects have been shot in colour, most are in black & white. 'For many years I was mainly a black & white photographer,' he says. 'Slowly I started to develop knowledge of colour photography and I enjoyed it. Now my choice is influenced by the topic I am working on. Usually, however, even when I choose to use colour, my photography tends to be monochromatic.'

Right: Survivors of the Haiti earthquake have a makeshift bath in the street, Port-au-Prince, January 2010



'HAITI AFTERMATH'

The story behind a World Press Photo award winner

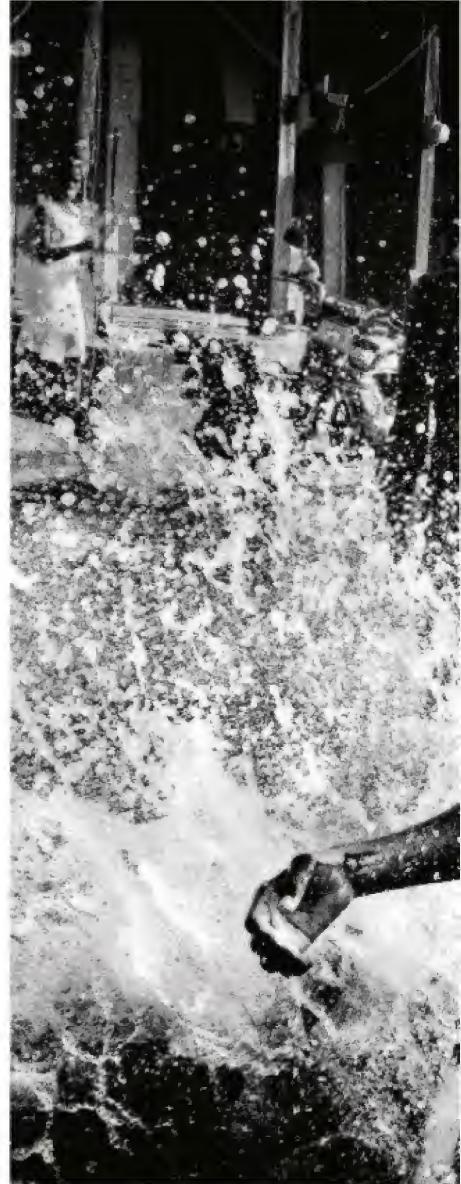
THE EARTHQUAKE that hit Haiti in January 2010 was one of the worst natural disasters in recent years. It measured 7.0 on the Richter scale and was followed by more than 50 aftershocks. It caused the deaths of an estimated 220,000 people and affected more than three million.

Venturi's photograph (above) was shot six days after the earthquake struck. It shows a young girl looking stunned by events, while the Marché Hyppollite in Port-au-Prince, a historic building constructed in 1891, burns in the background.

'I arrived after sunset and saw this child

completely astonished by the event,' Venturi remembers. 'She was staring at the void left by the earthquake. I realised this was a powerful image and I spent a few minutes trying to figure out the best light and the best angle to catch this moment.'

The picture's off-kilter angle, the contrast of the ferocity of the flames with the predominantly dark tones and the girl's expression, combine to give a powerful sense of the shock experienced by millions of Haitians. The photograph won several prizes, including first prize in the General News category of the World Press Photo 2011 awards.



Venturi travels to locations with a range of equipment, from digital SLRs to large-format kit (including, unusually, a Linhof 6x17cm panoramic camera), but has only one camera in his kit bag at any one time. The nature of his work means that the majority of images are shot on smaller digital cameras. He mainly uses natural daylight and rarely uses either a flashgun or a tripod, which allows him to work as unobtrusively as possible.



'One shot could change people's perception of the world and I know from experience it still can'

Portrait of a young widow, whose husband was killed by the Haiti earthquake in 2010

The combination of monochrome images and natural light gives Venturi's work a recognisable 'photojournalistic' style that follows in the tradition established by Robert Capa, Don McCullin and others. At the same time, his images have a strong creative element with frequent use of strong shadows and highlights.

He is aware that successful news pictures need to not only tell a story, but do so in a visually arresting way. 'A single shot, to be

a great photo, needs to inform, to convey emotion and to have an aesthetic impact,' he says. 'All of these characteristics make a visual icon of a photograph.'

Whether he's documenting domestic violence in Nicaragua, the plight of migrant workers in China, or civilian victims of the conflict in Afghanistan, there's always a strong sense of his immersion in a situation and the empathy Venturi feels for the people whose lives he's documenting.

VENTURI'S WORK TODAY

The high quality of Venturi's work over the years has resulted in two World Press Photo awards, recognition in the Sony World Photography awards and the Leica Gold Medal of Excellence, and worldwide publication in magazines including *Newsweek*, *National Geographic* and *Time* magazine.

When he's not working on current news stories (straight after our interview, he was flying to Istanbul to cover anti-government riots), he resumes his work on longer-term projects. His experience shows that even during lean times for photojournalists, the best ones will always be in demand.

Despite the greater knowledge of the world brought by television and the internet, Venturi remains as convinced about the importance of news photography as he was when he began.

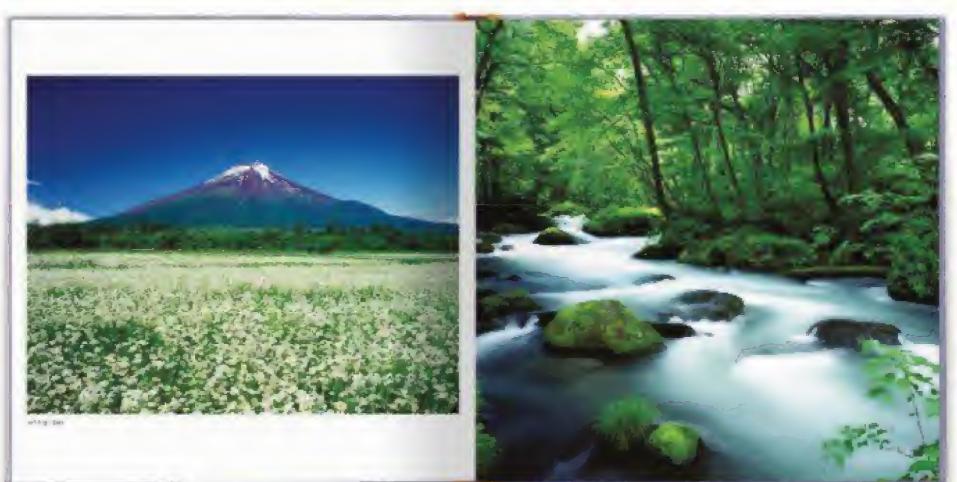
'Until the mid-1970s, when the majority of people didn't have the chance to travel abroad, photography helped societies to be aware of different parts of the world,' he says. 'One shot could change their perception of the world and I know from experience it still can. It's something I believe very strongly. A good picture is a seed that can help ideas to spread and inspire reflection when it gets on a fertile ground.' AP



An image shot in a hospital waiting room in Sierra Leone, from a story on the country's health crisis, January 2009

To see more of Riccardo Venturi's work, visit his website at www.riccardoventuri.com

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AP Testbench

Over the next few pages we present this week's equipment tests, reader questions and technique pointers



Breffo Adventure Camera Kit £20

www.breffo.com

A VERSATILE camera stand in the vein of Joby's GorillaPod, Breffo's Adventure Camera Kit comprises a version of its Spiderpodium smartphone stand that has been adapted to take a camera via a 1/4in screw mount in the centre. Eight opposable rubber-coated legs, which are thin but durable, can be bent into different positions or hooked onto sturdy objects, allowing the user to affix their camera in a variety of creative positions.

Breffo claims the product to be compatible with 'all' digital cameras, and while the 1/4in screw mount is indeed more or less universal, I wouldn't advise its use with anything larger than a CSC, or perhaps a smaller bridge camera. You just won't get enough stability, especially with a weighty lens attached. It's decent value, though, and compact users should definitely consider it. **Jon Stapley**

Amateur Photographer
A versatile stand with eight legs, best suited for use with compacts
★★★★★

The AP guarantee to you

All our tests are conducted by people who understand the product area, as well as photography. We aim to discover any shortcomings, as well as finding those aspects that deserve praise. All our tests are thorough, honest and independent



Polaroid 75in carbon-fibre tripod £189.99

www.polaroidstore.com

IT'S BEEN a few years since Polaroid itself stopped making instant cameras (although Polaroid-branded cameras are produced on licence), so you may not think to associate the name with accessories like tripods. It'd be a shame if this meant you missed out, as its carbon-fibre tripod offers an impressive 75in (1.9 metres) of extended length for a price that's competitive in the tripod market. Its legs feature four expandable sections – a great asset on uneven terrain – and Polaroid claims that its 'unique internal gasket design' will prevent dirt and grit building up in the leg sections. A fully articulated ballhead and a quick-release plate are included.

I was really quite impressed with this tripod – it is intuitive to use, with quick adjustments possible via the ballhead, and two bubble levels to ensure the camera remains steady. The tripod also comes packaged with a useful zip-up carry case, allowing easy transportation. With competitive pricing, a solid build and impressive extension, this is definitely recommended. **Jon Stapley**

Amateur Photographer

A solid tripod with ballhead – lengthy when extended but easy to transport

★★★★★

FORTHCOMING TESTS

In the next few weeks AP hopes to run the following equipment through the most rigorous testing procedures in the industry

Leica M

We appraise this £5,000, 24-million-pixel digital rangefinder to see if it is really worth the asking price.

AP 6 July

Samyang T-S 24mm f/3.5 ED AS UMC tilt-and-shift lens

We put this reasonably priced tilt-and-shift lens to the test.

AP 6 July

Panasonic Lumix DMC-LF1

Panasonic's new premium travel compact with 28-200mm equivalent zoom lens is put through its paces.

AP 13 July

Baryta inkjet papers

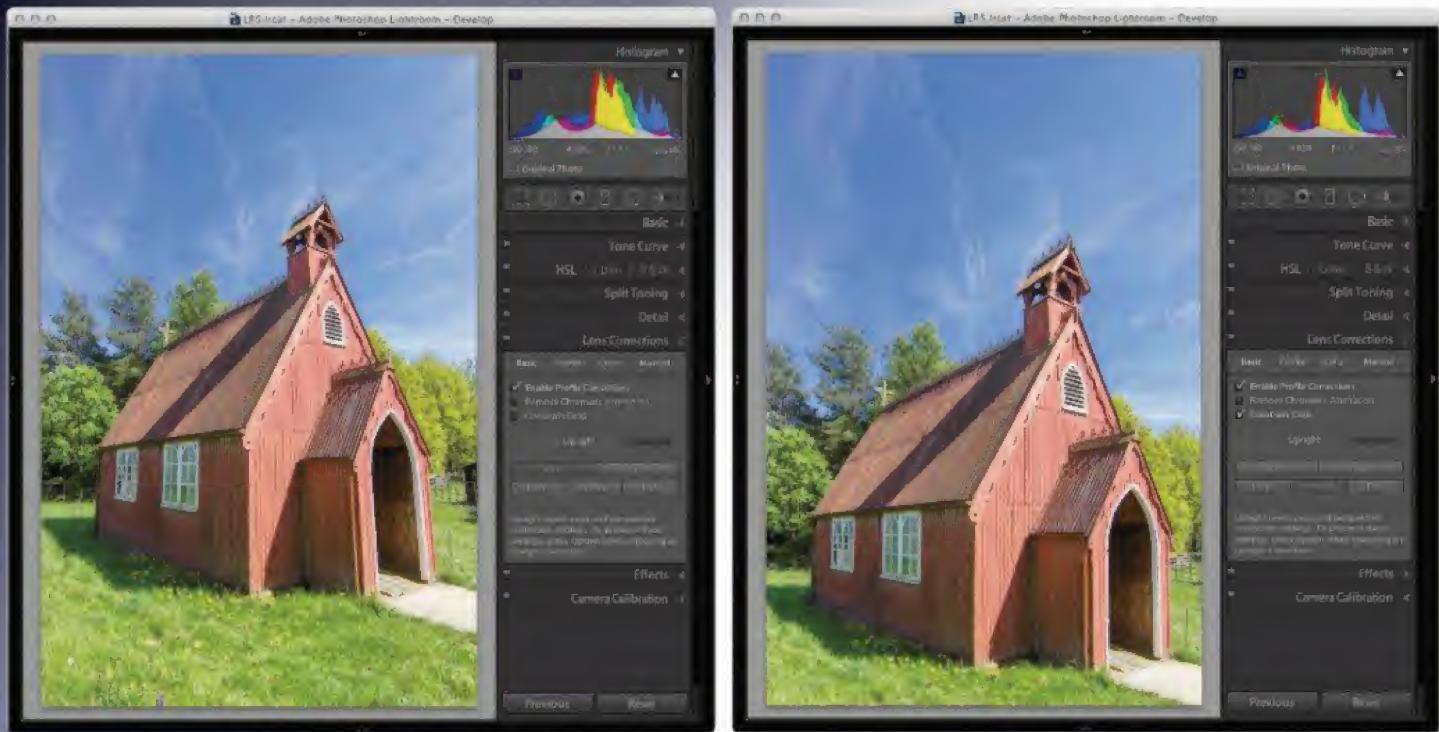
Vincent Oliver rounds up six of the best baryta inkjet papers on the market today.

AP 13 July

50mm lens round-up

We put 12 standard 50mm f/1.4 and f/1.8 lenses in a head-to-head test.

AP 20 July (lens special)



Adobe Lightroom 5

Adobe Photoshop expert **Martin Evening** takes a look at the new features that **Adobe Lightroom 5** offers enthusiast photographers

ADobe caused quite a stir recently when it announced how the next version of Photoshop – Photoshop CC – would only be available as part of its Creative Cloud. For many professional users, this represents a good deal, as shown by the 500,000 people who joined in its first year. However, this is not a view shared by all, and it has left a lot of photographers frustrated by the current upgrade options.

Fortunately, Adobe has stated that Lightroom will continue to be sold separately as a perpetual licence. Lightroom has certainly now matured to the point where one might argue you don't need Photoshop, so it will be interesting to see what's new in its latest release, Lightroom 5.

OFFLINE EDITING

New to the program are Smart Previews. These can be built on import or generated manually via the Library module, and allow you to work offline more effectively. They can also help to speed up editing in the Develop module by loading data faster, which will be most noticeable when editing large files.

If you build Smart Previews for your Lightroom catalogue and copy the Lightroom catalogue folder to another

computer, such as a laptop, you can continue to edit the photos while the original master photos are offline. You can carry out edits in the Develop module, and export photos via Publish Services or the Export dialogue (except as original files).

Working offline using Smart Previews feels no different from having the original masters present, except the maximum viewing resolution for editing in the Develop module is limited to 2540 pixels. When you copy a modified catalogue back to the main computer, the edit changes are automatically updated. Basically, Smart Previews now make it easier to switch working on a catalogue between different computers and is a positive first step towards creating fully automated backup workflows.

DEVELOP TOOLS

The Develop module controls are now more responsive and become accessible as soon as the initial low-resolution preview has loaded, and there is a Lab Color Readouts option in the contextual menu for the Histogram panel in the Develop module.

The Lens Corrections panel features Upright correction buttons. These can apply automatic perspective corrections and be used to auto-correct architectural

Upright corrections can be used to automatically correct the perspective in architectural photographs

photographs. The way it does this involves a complex combination of transforms that go beyond what can be achieved using the manual transform sliders on their own. There are four options to choose from: Auto, Level, Vertical and Full. The Auto option should, in most cases, produce a balanced adjustment. Sometimes the Vertical or Full settings may produce a better result, while Level is more like an auto-leveelling setting. An Aspect slider has been added to the manual transform section, which allows you to fine-tune how much an image has been stretched vertically or horizontally as a result of an automated Upright transform.

A Radial filter now complements the Graduated filter and can be used to apply localised adjustments that either increase in strength from the centre outwards, or are reversed to apply the maximum effect to the outside areas and taper off towards the centre. This tool allows you to apply single or multiple vignetting adjustments that can be precisely positioned on the image. It can also be used to produce all kinds of effects. For example, I have found it useful to create a sharpening adjustment that increases in strength towards the edges of the frame and use this to correct for the fall-off in sharpness that occurs with some lenses.

One of the best new features is the Extended Spot Removal tool. Previously, you could only apply spot circles of a varying radius to remove blemishes from an image. It

NEW FEATURES

- Smart Previews
- Upright correction buttons
- Radial filter
- Extended Spot Removal tool
- Visualize Spots option
- PNG-format support
- Improved Book module
- Improved Slideshow module



was fine as a spotting tool to remove sensor marks, but that was all. In Lightroom 5, you can now click and drag to precisely define the area you wish to repair, just like you can when working with the Spot Removal tool or Healing Brush in Photoshop. After applying a circle or brush spot, Lightroom auto calculates the optimum area to sample from. Now, in Lightroom 5, if you press the forward slash key (/), it auto calculates a new area to sample from. So, if you don't like the initial auto result, repeatedly pressing the / key forces Lightroom into recalculating better areas to sample from.

Lastly, there is a Visualize Spots option. When this box is checked, a black & white

threshold mask preview is applied. By adjusting the accompanying slider, you can use this to highlight where sensor marks occur in an image. You can then work more effectively with the Spot Removal tool to locate and remove these.

OTHER ITEMS

PNG-format images are now supported, which will mainly benefit users of mobile devices – the PNG format is used when creating screengrabs, for example. Configurable grid and guide overlays can be added in Loupe view, and verification of DNG files is possible using DNG Validation.

The Book module allows you to add page

The Extended Spot Removal tool now allows you to carry out complex, non-destructive retouching on raw images

numbers to a book design and you can edit the preset page layouts to create custom user page settings. Some work has gone into improving the underlying Slideshow engine to make the Slideshow module more expandable in the future. Already it is now possible to add video clips to a slideshow, as well as having improved synchronisation of slides to an audio soundtrack. **AP**

Minimum system requirements

Windows

Intel Pentium 4 or AMD Athlon 64 processor, DirectX 10-capable or later graphics card, Microsoft Windows 7 with Service Pack 1 or Windows 8, 2GB of RAM (4GB recommended), 2GB of available hard-disk space, 1024x768-pixel display, internet connection required for internet-based services

Mac OS

Multicore Intel processor with 64-bit support, Mac OS X v10.7 or v10.8, 2GB of RAM (4GB recommended), 2GB of available hard-disk space, 1024x768-pixel display, internet connection required for internet-based services

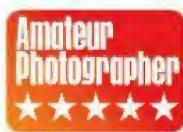


Using the Radial filter, you can apply all kinds of localised radial adjustments, such as this vignette



Verdict

IT HAS been just over 12 months since Lightroom 4 was released, which makes this a rather short development cycle (driven most likely by the demands of the almighty Creative Cloud). There aren't a huge number of new features in this particular release, but what it does offer is probably just enough to tempt current users to upgrade. When you look at the new features in Photoshop CC, what stands out most are those in Camera Raw, all of which make Lightroom 5 look like a more interesting proposition for photographers. It's got the best bits of Photoshop CC, but at a much-reduced cost.



Adobe Lightroom 5 is available from www.adobe.com, priced £102.57 for the full version or £57.64 for the upgrade



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Sony Cyber-shot DSC-HX50

With its 20.4-million-pixel sensor coupled with a stabilised 30x optical zoom lens, we find out whether the **Sony Cyber-shot DSC-HX50** makes the perfect compact travel camera

Callum McInerney-Riley
Technical writer

SONY'S high-end travel compact cameras have impressed us over the past few years. In 2012, the Sony Cyber-shot DSC-HX9V won AP's Consumer Compact Camera of the Year award, while the Sony Cyber-shot DSC-HX20V won the same award in 2013. The latest version, the Cyber-shot DSC-HX50, shares a number of features with its predecessor, the HX30, but it has also inherited some of its characteristics from Sony's premium compact camera, the Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX1, which costs £2,500. These features include an exposure-compensation dial and multiple-interface hotshoe, but more about these later.

The HX50 has a 20.4-million-pixel sensor compared to the HX30's 18.2

million pixels. The HX50 also has a greater optical zoom range (a 30x optical zoom compared with the HX30's 20x) and Wi-Fi connectivity. However, the compact travel camera category is a very competitive market and the HX50 is up against some stiff competition. Panasonic's Lumix DMC-TZ40 has an 18.1-million-pixel sensor but a smaller focal range, while the Olympus SH-50 offers a 24x zoom and a 16-million-pixel sensor, although both come with a street price of around £250 compared to the HX50's £320.

FEATURES

Sony has opted to use the same Exmor R CMOS 1/2.3in sensor in the HX50 as in other cameras in the HX series. However, the new model has a 20.4-million-pixel sensor compared to 18.2 million pixels in the HX30. Sony claims the Exmor R sensor produces half the amount of noise compared to a conventional sensor using a back-illuminated design.

The standout feature of the HX50 is

AT A GLANCE

- 30x optical zoom
- 24-720mm (35mm equivalent) Sony G lens
- 20.4-million-pixel Exmor R CMOS sensor
- Easy Wi-Fi shooting and sharing
- Multiple-interface hotshoe
- ±2EV dial
- Optical SteadyShot
- Street price around £320

the extensive 30x optical zoom provided by the 4.3-129mm Sony G lens, which has a 35mm equivalent of 24-720mm. Of course, at 720mm there is the issue of camera shake, but Sony has used its SteadyShot technology to optically stabilise the lens to help avoid this. Measuring 108.1x64.3x38.3mm, the HX50 is currently the world's smallest camera to feature a 30x optical zoom. With its extensive focal range, the camera is suitable for macro work, telephoto shots and everything in between.

The sensitivity range of the HX50 runs from ISO 80 to 12,800, although in iAuto it is limited to ISO 80-3200. After ISO 3200, the camera helps reduce noise by taking six pictures in succession and then combining them. These images are very quick to process thanks to the HX50's Bionz processor, which is capable of processing 10 frames per second for up to ten frames and can be selected from the menu. Advanced Wi-Fi connectivity not only makes it easy to share photos directly with a smartphone or tablet and publish them online, but it also supports shooting directly from a smartphone or tablet.

As stated earlier, the HX50 has inherited some of its features from the Cyber-shot DSC-RX1, one of which is an exposure-compensation

dial. Exposure control is $\pm 2EV$ in 0.3EV steps. The other feature is a multiple-interface hotshoe, which allows compatibility with a number of Sony accessories, including external flashes, microphones and the EV1MK electronic viewfinder. The EV dial is a brilliant addition to the camera, making it easy to correct any exposure metering inaccuracies.

8/10

BUILD AND HANDLING

Made from polycarbonate, the Sony Cyber-shot DSC-HX50 offers the sort of sturdy build quality we have come to expect from a Sony camera. Weighing just 272g with battery and card, the camera is easy to carry, although due to its size it is best suited to a large pocket.

On the front of the camera body is a raised, textured, rubberised grip, the profile of which is roughly the width of a pencil. This makes the HX50 feel very secure in the hand, especially when shooting in portrait orientation. Another small textured thumb grip is located on the opposite side of the camera, just above the d-pad. Together, these grips give the camera a solid ergonomic feel.

On the back of the camera is a multi-functional scroll wheel that can be used to scroll through settings and pictures, which doubles as a directional control for navigating the menu controls. All but two of the buttons on the rear of the camera have a raised profile, making them easy to press and aiding general camera control. The two that do not have a raised profile are the playback button, which is sunk into the body slightly, and a designated movie-record button. Located just millimetres away from the thumb grip, the movie-record button is all too easy to accidentally press.

Manual shooting is easy thanks to the ability to tailor the HX50 to your needs. The memory-recall setting, located on the mode dial, allows the user to set three different custom settings that can be accessed quickly. I set up three settings – one for portraits, one for landscape and one for macro. While walking, I noticed some nice wild flowers and without any trouble I quickly recalled setting number three and my preference of macro settings to help me capture the shot I wanted.

8/10

METERING

Overall, I found the multi-metering mode on the HX50 to be generally accurate. When shooting on a bright sunny day, scenes with high contrast have a tendency to be slightly underexposed when using evaluative metering, with the camera choosing to retain details in the brighter highlight areas. Thankfully, the addition of the exposure-compensation dial makes it easy to adjust the exposure quickly. It is great to have this premium feature in a compact camera such as the HX50.

Facts & figures



RRP	£350
Sensor	20.4-million-pixel, 1/2.3in (6.16 x 4.62mm) Exmor R CMOS sensor
Output size	5184 x 3888 pixels
Lens	Sony G 30x zoom (24-720mm 35mm equivalent) f/3.5-6.3
File format	JPEG
Sensitivity	ISO 80-3200 (iAuto), ISO 80-12,800 (Superior Auto), ISO 80-1600 (Program Auto)
Shutter speeds	1-1/1600sec (4-1/1600sec iAuto)
Metering system	Multi-pattern, centreweighted, spot
White balance	Auto, daylight, cloudy, fluorescent1, fluorescent2, fluorescent3, incandescent, flash, one push, one push set, white balance shift
Exposure modes	Program, aperture priority, shutter priority, manual, memory recall, iSweep, movie mode, scene selection, intelligent auto, superior auto
Focus	Single, continuous, manual
AF modes	Multi-point, flexible spot, area, tracking
LCD monitor	3in, 921,600-dot TFT Xtra Fine Trublack
Storage media	SD, SDHC, SDXC
Power	Rechargeable Lithium N NP-BX1 (400 shots)
Weight	245g (without battery and card)
Dimensions	108.1 x 64.3 x 38.3mm

Sony, The Heights, Brooklands, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0XW. Tel: 01932 816 000. Website: www.sony.co.uk

The Sony HX50's 30x optical zoom is extremely impressive for a camera of its size



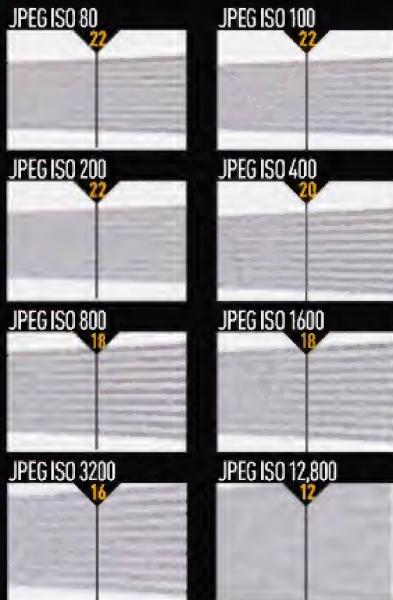
24mm

Shooting at +0.3EV achieved results better suited to my personal preference.

Apart from the evaluative multi-metering mode, centreweighted and spot metering are also on hand for trickier situations. However, the multi-metering mode and exposure-compensation dial are all that most photographers should need with

RESOLUTION AND NOISE CONTROL

These images show 72ppi (100% on a computer screen) sections of images of a resolution chart, captured with the lens set to around 100mm (equivalent) at f/5.6. We show the section of the resolution chart where the camera starts to fail to reproduce the lines separately. The higher the number visible in these images, the better the camera's detail resolution at the specified sensitivity setting.



this type of travel compact camera.

8/10

DYNAMIC RANGE

In general, the balance between the shadows and highlight detail is to be expected from a camera with a sensor



'I photographed mint leaves at a focal length of around 10cm and found that even the tiny hairs on the stems were sharp'

of this size. A fair amount of shadow and highlight detail is usually retained in a well-balanced scene, but in more challenging conditions highlights and shadows are lost. Frequently, when the camera meters for the foreground, even on overcast days, little detail is resolved in the skies.

7/10

AUTOFOCUS

One of the HX50's most important features is its focusing speed. Sony says high-speed AF is capable of focusing at 0.1secs, and when using the vast zoom lens at its widest focal lengths the lens does indeed snap quickly into focus.

However, as the lens zooms, the focusing speed decreases, and at the maximum 30x zoom length the system can take around a second to focus, particularly in dim light. In very low light the AF assist beam does a good job of helping to find focus.

Overall, the AF speed is about what you would expect from a travel zoom camera with such a huge zoom lens.

8/10

NOISE, RESOLUTION AND SENSITIVITY

Noise is tamed by Sony's in-camera adaptive noise-reduction feature. The greatest amount of noise reduction is applied to areas with the least amount of detail. For example, a polished piece of metal typically has little detail, so the noise reduction will smooth the area and reduce noise. Around distinct edges and areas of heavy detail less noise reduction is applied, causing these areas to be noisier but retaining optimum detail and sharpness. At ISO 80 hints of luminous noise start to appear around areas of high detail and on solid edges, while less detailed areas look smooth. In my opinion, throughout the lower sensitivity ranges this makes images look better.

After ISO 3200 the camera uses multi-frame noise reduction. It stacks six images on top of each other to reduce the amount of noise. This works effectively so long as the subjects are not moving at speed. ISO 3200 and above really tests the small sensor in the HX50, with images often losing lots of

detail and appearing smudgy due to the in-camera noise reduction.

Shooting at ISO 400 achieves a comfortable balance between both speed and noise. Images are clear and the noise reduction is evident, but it doesn't become an issue until ISO 800 and above. For most of my shooting the ISO setting rarely went above ISO 400.

One of the things that really stood out for me was the detail the HX50 resolved with macro subjects. I photographed mint leaves at a focal length of around 10cm and found that even the tiny hairs on the stems of the mint leaves were sharp (see above).

Slight purple fringing was present at the edges of some images, although it looks as though some in-camera reduction has taken place to make it softer.

24/30

WHITE BALANCE AND COLOUR

Adjustments for brightness, colour and vividness can be made via the bottom button on the direction-control dial. This can make the colours in an image warmer or cooler, brighten the images or adjust how punchy the colours are. This was useful when the white balance was a little off, enabling tiny adjustments to be made to compensate for this. However, overall, the



The slightly soft purple fringing can be seen in the edges of high-contrast scenes

Although the results of our resolution charts are not that impressive, the HX50 is still capable of resolving some fine detail, such as in this macro shot of mint leaves

white balance is accurate even in situations with conflicting light sources, and it is generally true to the scene.

Various picture effects are available, which take an image and process it in-camera. I found the rich tone monochrome to be very effective. This takes a black & white image and uses the HDR function to accentuate detail. Other picture modes such as toy camera and miniaturise make for some fun and creative ways to capture images.

9/10

VIEWFINDER, LIVE VIEW, LCD AND VIDEO

Impressively for a travel compact camera, there is an electronic viewfinder – the EV1MK. However, at a whopping £379.99, this is nearly £30 more expensive than the HX50 itself. Thankfully the 3in, TFT Xtra Fine Trublack LCD, with an impressive 921,600-dot resolution, is excellent. Images on this screen are very clear, and by magnifying the image I was able to double-check some of the finer details.

Video is recorded in full HD 1080p, which is stabilised by the Movie SteadyShot optical stabilisation system that makes it great to use handheld. Zooming while video recording is slowed dramatically to make video footage smoother. Another advantage of this is the fact that zooming is inaudible and won't be picked up by the internal microphone. **AP**

Verdict

DESIGNED as a travel camera, the Sony Cyber-shot DMC-HX50 has one really standout feature – its 24-720mm (35mm equivalent) zoom lens. Packing this 30x zoom lens into such a small compact is an impressive feat.

However, given that the HX50 has a 20.4-million-pixel sensor, we would have expected the camera to resolve slightly more detail than it does. There are also signs of luminance noise even at ISO 80, although it does not become an issue until ISO 800. Colour noise is very well controlled and is kept to an absolute minimum even at high sensitivities.

With most camera manufacturers producing models with similar features, Sony has some stiff competition. However, the large zoom lens should really help the HX50 stand out from the crowd. Combined with excellent image stabilisation, the lens is very versatile and capable of taking a huge range of images. For those who want a small travel compact camera for summer holidays the HX50 is tough to beat, although it isn't without its flaws.

**Amateur
Photographer**

Tested as a Travel compact
Rated Very good

80%

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
FEATURES	8/10									
BUILD/HANDLING	8/10									
NOISE/RESOLUTION	24/30									
DYNAMIC RANGE	7/10									
AWB/COLOUR	9/10									
METERING	8/10									
AUTOFOCUS	8/10									
LCD/VIEWFINDER	8/10									



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The raw truth

If you really want to take control of your photography, stop shooting JPEGs and try raw capture. **Ian Farrell** explains how

A LOT goes on inside your camera when you take a picture. After the shutter closes, a flurry of activity turns the electrical signals from the camera's sensor into a photograph that can be viewed on-screen, edited on your PC and printed on paper. However, this process is more complicated than it seems: raw-sensor data must be turned from greyscale to colour via a process known as demosaicing before being adjusted for white balance, sharpness, noise reduction and all manner of other factors. Eventually, a JPEG file is produced that contains the finished photo in a neat, and relatively small, package.

For many situations, this automatic processing is just what is needed. JPEG files can be shared with your friends, opened in just about any app on your computer and they often need little else doing to them at all. However, all this convenience can

come at a price. Much of the data originally recorded by the sensor is thrown away when a JPEG file is made, and the camera's one-size-fits-all image processing can be a bit limiting. For this reason, photographers looking to maximise image quality often prefer to take control of image processing themselves, using all the raw data from their camera's sensor to produce the final image. This is done by capturing a raw file instead of a JPEG.

This might all sound too much like hard work, but working with raw files is not as difficult as you think. All DSLRs and compact system cameras, and even some compacts, can capture raw files that contain every bit of data recorded by the sensor. You'll need special software to open such files, since each camera's raw file is different and unique, but many of the commonly used

Although raw images require some time and effort, the extra detail and finesse revealed in the final image, such as in the picture above, make shooting in raw format worthwhile

image-editing apps can do this, from Adobe Photoshop and Elements to Apple iPhoto and Google Mosaic.

Many photographers compare a raw file to a negative, and a JPEG to a print, and this is a good analogy. A raw file can be processed (or printed) in many different ways to produce alternative styles of photograph, just as a darkroom worker might experiment with a negative to make different styles of print.

FLEXIBLE EDITING

Raw files offer more options than JPEGs when it comes to post-production editing because it's possible to set parameters, such as white balance, sharpening and dynamic range, retrospectively. Software like Adobe Camera Raw (a plug-in that underpins Photoshop, Elements and Lightroom) allows each of these factors to be fine-tuned and gives real-time previews of what the results will look like. When the photographer has finished adjusting these settings, the software 'processes' the raw-file information accordingly, either saving it as a JPEG or TIFF file or simply opening it into the main application for further editing.

If you are already enjoying shooting JPEG files you may be wondering why you'd go to this extra trouble. The advantage of shooting raw is not convenience but control – leaving your options open and enjoying the freedom not to have to decide on every single

Raw capture Advantages



camera setting at the time of shooting.

Furthermore, since raw files contain much more information than JPEGs, it's easier to recover detail from blown-out highlights and underexposed shadows. Information outside the range of a histogram is thrown away by your camera when it makes a JPEG file, which is why bright highlights burn out so easily. In a raw file this information is still there, even if you can't see it in the picture, and it can be brought back into the visible range of the histogram using controls such as Highlights and Whites in the case of Adobe Camera Raw.

This dynamic range is a bonus for those shooting in high-contrast situations. Some DSLRs are now so good at recording detail in light and dark areas that HDR-type effects can be created from one raw-image file.

Since a raw file is converted when it is processed – either by opening it into Photoshop or by saving it as a TIFF or JPEG – this type of image editing is often described as non-destructive. The pixels in a raw file are never changed or destroyed,

Above: JPEG images can lose a lot of detail in highlight areas, whereas this information can be recovered when editing raw images

Below: Raw files can often appear quite flat, with editing almost always necessary. This can be seen as a very time-consuming disadvantage by those who prefer JPEG images

so you can always go back and have another go. Compare this to a JPEG file, which can be edited directly. Here the original pixels can be altered and changed, and unless there is another copy of the file somewhere, those changes will be permanent.

RAW IMAGE QUALITY

While the extra information in raw files means they can deliver superior image quality when compared to JPEGs, this does rely on the photographer making the right adjustments at the raw-processing stage. Often a raw file can look a bit flat directly from the camera, whereas a JPEG captured at the same time is bolder and punchier because it has been processed and tweaked. However, a properly processed raw file can exhibit broader dynamic range and smoother gradation between colours, especially when subtle changes in tone are involved. What's more, the ability to fine tune a raw file, while previewing it at 100% magnification on-screen, means that artefacts from oversharpening or excessive

noise reduction can be avoided.

JPEG files are always compressed, which is handy when you want to send images by email or upload them to the web, or keep lots of files on a memory card or hard disk. Yet this reduction in file size comes at a cost. JPEGs employ a 'lossy' compression method, so-called because it sacrifices a small amount of image quality in order to make files smaller. In the majority of cases this is not a problem, but for those producing large prints for fine-art purposes, or carrying out lots of retouching and resaving, the JPEG's lossy compression can cause issues.

It is possible to select the amount of compression applied to a JPEG file when it is saved by adjusting the Quality slider in the Save dialogue in your image-editing software. The most compression is applied at quality setting 1, and the least at quality setting 10. At settings below 6–7 you'll start to notice problems in areas of continuous tone, such as a smooth blue skies, which can exhibit smudged, 'blocky' artefacts. These get worse the more times the file is re-saved, since the





compression is re-applied each time.

This is where raw again scores an image-quality advantage: any compression in a raw file is lossless – that is, it doesn't trade off image quality for file size. What's more, by saving the converted raw file as a TIFF or PSD file – both also lossless file formats – you can avoid lossy compression completely.

There are other quality benefits too, which arise from the greater number of colours in a 14-bit raw file compared to an 8-bit JPEG. This comes into its own when reproducing very subtle differences between similar colours, and when retouching: because it contains so much more information, it's harder to 'break' a raw file by pushing and pulling it around in Photoshop.

DISADVANTAGES OF RAW

While raw shooting delivers better image quality, more flexible editing and a non-destructive workflow, there are disadvantages to working in this way. Raw files are so much larger than JPEGs that you'll find you can fit far fewer of them on

your camera's memory card and on your computer's hard disk. This means you might have to invest in some higher capacity cards and external drives if raw shooting is something you want to do regularly.

Equally, their larger size and the need for specialist software that can read them makes raw files unsuitable for sharing with friends and family, and uploading to the internet. Thankfully, every camera that can shoot raw files can also capture raw and JPEG simultaneously, and we'd recommend this as a way forward if you are new to raw shooting. Having the best of both worlds means you can instantly and quickly view a series of images as JPEGs, then work on the higher-quality raw files in Photoshop when you've identified a favourite.

As raw files are unique to a specific camera manufacturer and model, the raw-processing software needs to be kept up to date in order to know about the formats from new cameras. If you are an Adobe user, this is usually a straightforward and simple update of the Camera Raw plug-in from the Adobe website, and other software developers, like Apple, do the same. Be careful, though, when buying a new camera that you don't need to make all manner of other expensive hardware upgrades too.

Suppose, for a moment, you upgrade from an older DSLR, say, the Nikon D5000, to a newer one such as the D7100. You'll only be able to read raw files from the new camera by downloading an update of the Camera Raw plug-in from Adobe, but here's the problem: often it's only the current version of Photoshop that is supported with updates, while older versions are not. This means you'll a Photoshop upgrade too, which can cost a bit of money. Then you might realise that the computer you were using with Photoshop CS3 is not fast enough to run Photoshop CS6 or CC, which could mean buying more RAM or even a new computer entirely.

In a sense, this is the hidden cost of upgrading a DSLR when you're a raw shooter, although there are ways around it. If you find yourself with no way to upgrade your



Raw

JPEG

BIT DEPTH

TO GET an idea of just how much more information there is in a raw file, compared to a JPEG, we need to think about bit depth. A JPEG file is 8-bit in nature. This means that each of its three colour channels (red, green and blue) contains 2^8 , or 256, brightness shades. Multiplying all three colour channels together gives the total number of colours possible in the image, with $256 \times 256 \times 256 = 16.7$ million colours. That sounds like a lot, and it is: there are easily enough colours to describe an average scene without difficulty. Yet when small differences between subtle tones of similar colours are present, 8-bit files can sometimes struggle to reproduce this accurately, especially after editing with tools like Levels or Curves in Photoshop.

Raw files, on the other hand, preserve every bit of data from a camera's electronics, which are usually (but not always) 14 bit. Applying the same maths, 14-bit files contain 2^{14} , or 16,384, brightness shades in each colour channel, giving a much smoother transition from one shade to another, and a staggering 4.4 billion colours overall.

Any adjustments made to a raw file in Adobe Camera Raw will utilise all 14 bits of information in the file, but by default this will then open in the main application as an 8-bit file when you click Open Image. If you want to keep all 14-bits of information for editing in Photoshop too, change the bit depth to 16-bit in the Workflow Options dialogue (which is accessed by clicking the text link at the bottom of the screen). If you are wondering about the 2-bits of difference between the 14-bit raw files and Photoshop's 16-bit mode, these are filled in with empty information by the application, since Adobe applications only offer 8, 16 and 32-bit editing.



Raw edited

SHARPENING AND RAW

ONE OF the greatest crimes in digital imaging is over-sharpening. It's an alien concept to those new to digital photography because how can something be too sharp? Yet all digital images need some electronic sharpening applied to them to overcome the effects of a camera's optical low-pass filter – a piece of glass just in front of the sensor that helps prevent artefacts, like moiré and false colour. This electronic sharpening is applied by your DSLR or CSC every time a JPEG is made.

Unfortunately, once sharpening has been applied there is nothing you can do to remove it, which is annoying if your camera gets a bit over-enthusiastic at its default sharpening level, or if you wanted to add sharpening selectively later in Photoshop or Elements. Symptoms of over-sharpening often include bright or dark halos around high-contrast edges, such as the horizon in a landscape image. These are highly visible in large prints and can really spoil an otherwise good shot.

Raw files have no such sharpening applied to them in camera, which is why they can sometimes lack pizzazz of a JPEG file when you first see them. Sharpening can be applied at the raw-processing stage (in the Details tab in Adobe Camera Raw) and this is best done at 100 per cent so you can see if you've gone too far.

Alternatively, some people like to leave sharpening to the end of the workflow, even saving an unsharpened version for the archives. In this case, leave the sharpening controls set to 0 in Camera Raw and cautiously apply it in Photoshop – again at 100 per cent magnification – using the Unsharp Mask or Smart Sharpen filters, which you'll find in the Filters>Sharpen menu.



Raw original



current software to read the raw files of a new camera, take a look at Adobe's DNG converter. This free app uses the Camera Raw plug-in to read raw files and convert them to DNG files – standing for Digital Negative – which is an open standard raw file format that most image-editing software can read. You can get it from www.adobe.com/dng.

It's also worth exploring the software that comes with your camera. None of it is as fully featured and easy to use as Adobe products tend to be, but some packages (such as Digital Photo Professional from Canon) produce excellent results.

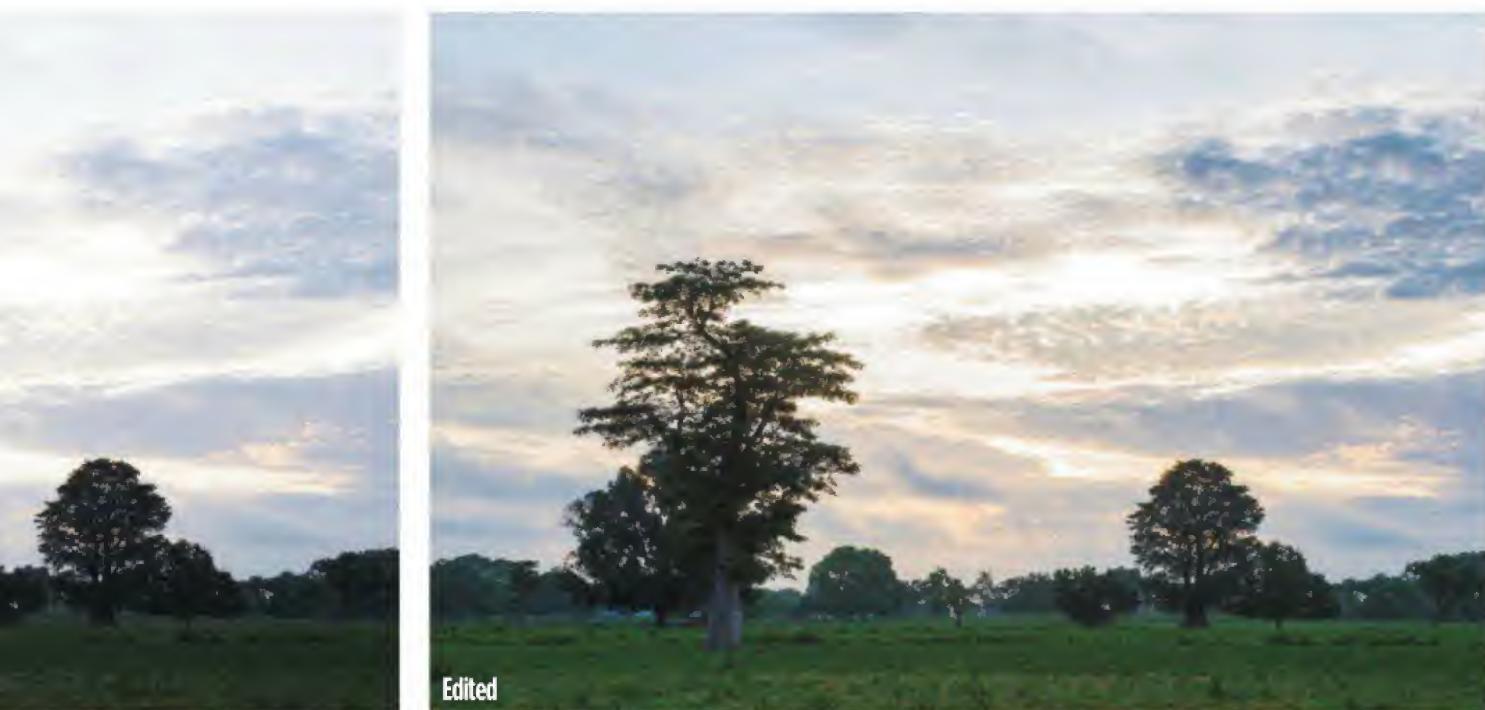
IS IT WORTH IT?

Raw shooting can sound like a lot of technical hassle, but don't be put off. It's

IN-CAMERA RAW

WHILE raw files are best processed on your home computer on a big screen with software especially designed for the job, some DSLR and compact system cameras also offer the ability to process raw files, taken in-camera, into JPEGs. This is useful if you are only shooting raw and suddenly want a JPEG – to upload to a website or to share with a friend, or if you simply want to edit whilst you are away from your computer.

The options given for in-camera raw processing are fewer and more basic than those in, say, Adobe Camera Raw, but there are still useful editing tools. The ability to adjust white balance, noise reduction, sharpening and brightness is common, and you'll often be able to select the size and compression level of the resulting JPEG file too. And thanks to the non-destructive nature of raw file workflow, you can create as many different JPEG versions of an image as you like without destroying or affecting the original. Feel free to experiment!



Edited

true that shooting raw does add an extra layer to your workflow, but this is more than outweighed by the flexibility that raw files offer in terms of image editing. The ability to fine-tune colour temperature, rescue blown highlights and correct mistakes in exposure will make you a more creative photographer, and your big prints, free of artefacts, will look stunning on the living-room wall.

Biting the bullet with raw is as simple as digging out your largest capacity memory card, engaging raw as the image quality setting on your camera and carrying on shooting as normal. Use raw + JPEG to shoot both types of file at the same time – so you have something to fall back on while you're learning new techniques – and enjoy the extra dimension that raw will add to your digital photography. **AP**

Pulling back highlights and lifting shadows is more effective with raw files than JPEGs. However, after a lot of adjustment, images can look a little artificial, especially their colour and contrast. Experiment with Saturation, Vibrance and Clarity, all of which can bring some realism back to the photograph



PROCESSING

NEF (RAW) processing



PROS AND CONS OF RAW FILES

ADVANTAGES

- The best image quality your camera can deliver
- Non-destructive editing
- Retrospective adjustment of some camera settings, like white balance and sharpening
- Extra bit-depth gives more colour shades
- Wider dynamic range makes it easier to recover lost shadow and highlight detail

DISADVANTAGES

- Large files need more card and disk space to store
- Need special software to open and process files before they can be edited and printed
- Raw files can often look flat straight from camera, compared to a JPEG file shot at the same time
- Large file sizes can limit continuous shooting: fewer raw files can be captured in one go than JPEG files

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Ask AP

Let the AP team answer your photographic queries



ADVICE ON ARCHIVING

Q I have a stack of family photographs going back more than 100 years that I inherited after my mum died. As I would like to archive them before distributing them among the family, would it be better to scan them or photograph them? My camera should be OK – I have a Canon EOS 5D Mark II with 180mm macro, 24–70mm f/2.8L and 70–200mm f/2.8L IS lenses – but is my Canon CanoScan LiDE 700F scanner up to the job? And what set-up would I adopt for either method? **Dave Smith**

A Assuming you're talking about prints, rather than film, and you want a quality result, I would opt for the scanner (assuming time and patience aren't an issue). Although your camera would be great for flat copying, to get the best results would require a traditional 'copy stand' approach: positioning the camera parallel to the print to avoid distortion, and lighting the print from two sides to guarantee even illumination. This isn't difficult to do with a tripod and a couple of lamps or flashes, but a dedicated copy stand makes it a whole lot easier, and makes it more of a tabletop exercise. Using a tripod will more likely mean you're working at floor level, which will be far less comfortable, especially as you'd likely need to bend over to position a print, stand up to photograph it, bend to replace it, and so on – your back won't thank you for it if you've got 100 years' worth of photographs to copy!

By comparison, scanning is far more sedentary and your LiDE 700F will be ideal for this. However, be prepared to enter a potentially mind-numbing workflow of insert print, preview, set scan area, start scan, wait for scan to

finish, remove print, insert new print, preview, set scan area, start scan, and so on. You may find an hour here and there is more realistic than tackling the project in a single sitting, which is another advantage of scanning – there's minimal equipment to set up or take down between sessions.

Of course, if you simply want to create a quick record of all the prints, and aren't too concerned about getting everything 'just so', then an alternative approach would be to photograph everything handheld. I'd still suggest that you set up two lamps or flashes (one each side of the print) for even illumination, but you could rest the prints on some sort of stand (a music stand, perhaps?) so they're at a convenient height, and quickly photograph them with your EOS 5D and stabilised 70–200mm zoom lens. Aim for a target exposure of around f/5.6–f/8, roughly 1/100sec and ISO 100–200, and set the highest JPEG image quality (raw is perhaps overkill in this scenario). A custom white balance would be useful, but not essential, and it will probably only need you to take a few test shots before you're ready to fly through your copying. **Chris Gatcum**

ASK...

Be it about modern technology, vintage equipment, photographic science or help with technique, here at AP we have the team that can help you. Simply email your questions to: apanswers@ipcmedia.com, via [twitter @ap_answers](https://twitter.com/ap_answers) or by post to: **Ask AP, Amateur Photographer Magazine, IPC Media, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU.**



PROBLEMS WITH PICASA

Q I have a Canon EOS 600D camera and find that its HDMI output is very good for showing high-quality pictures from the camera on a large-screen TV. I often tweak my pictures using Google's Picasa software – cropping, adjusting exposure, and so on – and then save them back to a standard folder on the computer. I emphasise that I understand how Picasa operates and I am not trying to use the 'interim' Picasa file system. However, when I try transferring these adjusted photos back onto an SD card (keeping to the same 'IMG_xxxx.jpg' naming format as the original files) with the aim of showing them on the TV, the camera refuses to recognise them. I presume some attribute(s) of the file have been changed. Do you know of a way of doing what I want to do, please? I haven't tried using Photoshop for doing the same tweaking and outputting to a card, as it is not as easy and quick as Picasa. **Terry Bramer**

A Unfortunately, it seems that if you want to edit your images and resave them onto a memory card for your camera to play back, you're going to need to use something other than Picasa. Google's free software has been criticised for the way in which it uses (and abuses) metadata, with some versions reportedly erasing up to two thirds of this non-image-forming information. The

FROM THE AP FORUM

Mouldy lens

Eastcoaster asks I have noticed some 'mould' on the inside of the front lens of my Canon EF 75–300mm. I have attempted to remove the three screws securing the lens, but am unable to do so. I contacted a local camera store and he says he can't do it, but can send it away. Well, I can do that and am waiting for a reply from Canon. Is there anything else I can do?

AP GLOSSARY METADATA

Whenever you take a photograph with a digital camera, you record far more than the 0 and 1 binary information that ultimately forms your pixels. Alongside the image data is a whole raft of additional information that falls under the heading of 'metadata' – literally, 'data about data'. In this context the data is about the image, and perhaps the metadata we are most familiar with is known as Exif data. This is a wealth of detail that is recorded by the camera, which tells you how and when a picture was taken and what it was created by. As a result, we can use Exif data to see what exposure settings were used for a particular shot, when it was photographed, the white balance that was chosen, and even the specific

camera and lens combination (right down to the serial number in some instances). With a GPS-enabled device, you can also record where an image was made.

In addition, the photographer can also add metadata to an image in the form of copyright details, keywords, captions and other information that becomes intrinsically linked to a specific image. This can be done in-camera, in your editing program or by using a dedicated Exif editor, and the general aim is to make it easy to see when, where, how, and by what and whom an image was created. In doing this – and adding keywords and captions – the whole cataloguing process is simplified as well, enabling digital images to be searched and found with greater ease.

problem is, metadata can contain essential elements – far more than just the shutter speed and aperture settings used – that cameras (and other devices) need to be able to identify an image to start with.

This isn't a problem when it comes to taking and editing a picture: your EOS 600D will write this necessary information into the metadata to start with, and it's not essential for your editing software in terms of it being able to read and open the image file. However, rather than ignore this information (which is what most editing software should do), it would appear that Picasa removes it. This will happen either when it opens the image or when it saves it, but in both cases the result is that the file

being output no longer contains this little nugget of data. As a result, your EOS 600D doesn't recognise it any more, even though you've followed the same naming protocol.

My advice would be to ditch Picasa and use something else. I appreciate that you say Photoshop isn't as easy and quick, but at the same time you say you haven't used it – it sounds to me that you're not that familiar with it yet. If you persevere and give it some time you'll find that it becomes far quicker and easier than it seems initially. Then, not only will you be able to put your edited images back onto your memory card and view them on your TV, but you will also be able to edit them using a far more sophisticated program. **Chris Gatcum**

nimbus replies Looking at the price of these on eBay as sold items, it may well not be worthwhile as a repair proposition. Even if removed, fungus eats into the lens coatings.

Eastcoaster replies I had not expected this answer. I moderate other forums and I expected a more constructive reply here.

thornrider replies I also looked this lens up on the internet and they are being sold for £99–£115 new, rather than the original £299. Someone reported that his Canon zoom repair cost £2.99 for parts and £111 in labour. Maybe this is what influenced nimbus to observe that the repair cost might exceed the price of a new lens.

frank1 replies It's a pity you can't accept an answer given in good faith. Paying for a repair

that might cost more than a replacement isn't economical. Pointing this out is good advice.

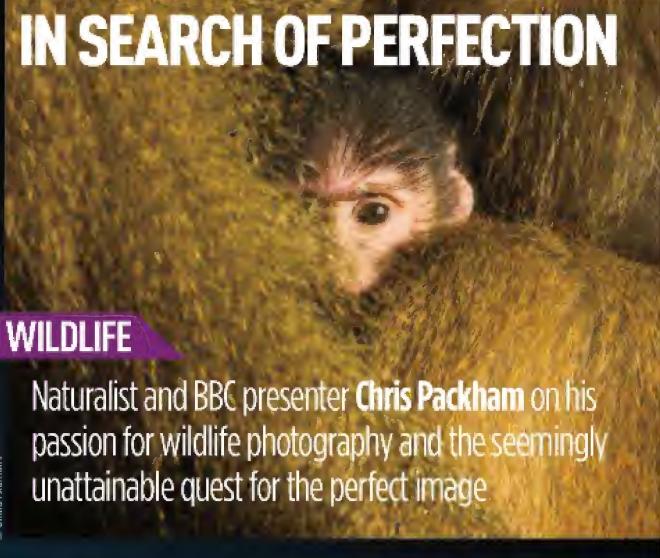
Benchista replies You can remove the element yourself, but your chances of correctly aligning it when you refix it are slim. Fungus can be deactivated with UV light if it's not too severe. That's your best solution – and unless it is severe there will be little effect on your pictures. The 75–300mm lens isn't a very expensive lens. I agree that it's unlikely to be worth the cost of repair. Are you sure it's not just a bit of dust, in which case ignore it?

Eastcoaster replies I have had a look at the lens and it seems that the contaminant is only small and in small areas. There is no visible disturbance to photographic quality, so I will monitor it and try the UV light idea.

In next week's AP

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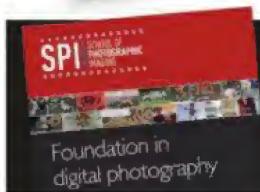
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HOW MUCH DO THEY COST?

The market price of the Vito cameras is governed by condition – cosmetic, optical and mechanical. The original Vito (not to be bought to use) should not cost more than £15-£30, depending on its cosmetic condition, or maybe £40 if it has its hinged yellow filter. A decent first-type Vito II would normally cost £35-£45, a second or third type Vito II (with shutter button) £40-£50, a good Vito IIA, which is scarcer and better to use, £65-£80. The original Vito B with f/3.5 Color Skopar is common and sells for around £20 in good condition, while the f/2.8 version with non-brightline finder is much scarcer and costs maybe £35. A slightly suspect Vito III sold recently on eBay for £154, but good ones typically make £300-£450. With all the folders, check that the self-erecting mechanism clicks the lens standard into position with the lens parallel to the film plane.



Voigtländer Vito III

Ivor Matanle lusts after a scarce and collectable 35mm folding camera that he has sadly never owned

FEW 35MM folding cameras ever came close to the specification and performance of the Voigtländer Vito III. Larger than most 35mm folding cameras, it was a drop-door (as distinct from sideways-opening) folding 35mm camera with coupled rangefinder and the excellent Voigtländer 50mm f/2 Ultron coated lens. Appearing in 1950, the Vito III had been adapted from the body of the post-war 35mm Voigtländer Prominent non-interchangeable rangefinder camera that had interchangeable lenses. The Vito III was initially fitted with a synchronised Compur Rapid shutter, and later with the Synchro Compur. A review in *Amateur Photographer* 13 February 1952 found that 'all parts of the mechanism move smoothly and well, particularly the very smooth shutter release'. The non-interchangeable 50mm f/2 Ultron gave 'the highest performance yet recorded

for a lens of this aperture... at all stops... the resolution given by this lens would be only limited by the resolving power of the film'.

The Vito III is a gem, but remains a very expensive gem, mainly because it is a scarce and collectible camera with an exceptionally fine (for its period) f/2 lens. If you can afford £300-£450 for a folding camera, it is a beautiful piece of equipment to use. Although without lever-wind and self-cocking, the Vito III is easier to set quickly than other folding 35mm cameras. The coupled rangefinder is focused with the left thumb using the wheel concentric with the rewind knob on the left of the top-plate of the camera (as seen when you use it), which is a typically eccentric Voigtländer feature that

works comfortably and well once you are accustomed to it. It was, arguably, the high point of Voigtländer's Vito range.

VITO HISTORY

The Vito saga began when the oldest photographic manufacturer of them all launched a high-specification 35mm folding camera in 1939 or 1940 (depending on where you lived then and who you



Folding stand

A stand unfolds from the base of the Vito III so that it can stand level without a tripod



Icons of photography Voigtländer Vito III



believe now). The Vito, now usually called the Vito I, entered a market already crowded with cameras of a similar specification. It appeared as the Second World War was about to begin, and it was overshadowed both by events and by other manufacturers' established offerings. Its saving grace was that, typically of Voigtländer, it had a considerably better lens than the camera's price suggested.

Even today, a great many large-format photographers swear by the five-element Voigtländer Heliar or the Apo-Lanthar, and thousands of classic-camera users believe the post-war coated Color Skopar to be the best ever four-element lens. The Color Skopar – a four-element modified Cooke triplet fundamentally similar to the better-known Zeiss Tessar and Leitz Elmar lenses – can often outperform Elmars and Tessars of similar focal length and maximum aperture.

The Kodak Retina, the archetypal 35mm folding camera, had appeared in 1934, which was five years earlier than the Vito, and by 1939 it had been improved and developed several times.

The Retina I and its coupled-rangefinder big brother, the Retina II, were available with top-quality Schneider and Zeiss lenses and Compur shutters, but were more expensive than the Vito. That original Vito of 1939/40 was an odd camera in several ways. Its shutter release was a bar that extended along the top edge of the door of the camera, rather than a button, and the first version (like several other Voigtländer cameras) had a built-in yellow filter hinged from the front of the lens mount – and when monochrome was king, this was a useful feature.

Unfortunately, the hinge was not strong and it is unusual to find a Vito I today with the filter intact. Perhaps strangest of all is the fact that the film is propelled through the Vito I not by a sprocketed drive but by a friction roller. This is believed to have originated because the camera was designed to accept either conventional 35mm cassettes or spooled paper-backed 35mm film. The original Vito even has a special 'P' start mark on the exposure counter for use when loading with paper-backed film.

Time has shown that the most consistent feature of this first Vito is its mechanical unreliability. It is not difficult to find one whose Compur, Compur Rapid or Prontor II shutter runs sweetly, but locating an example whose film transport and particularly the double-exposure prevention system permits

actual photography is quite a trick.

In 1947, the pre-war Vito reappeared, minus the hinged filter and with a 50mm f/3.5 Skopar in a flash-synchronised Prontor II shutter or (later) a Compur Rapid. Early examples had a small bump in the top-plate behind the frame counter. By 1949, the Vito I had an f/3.5 Color-Skopar lens in a synchronised Prontor S or Compur Rapid.

The Vito II of 1949/50 looked similar to the 1947 Vito, but lacked the 'V' logo on the front door. It was re-engineered, had conventional film transport, a coated f/3.5 Color Skopar lens and vastly improved reliability, but still had the bar shutter release. A second version Vito II of 1951 was equipped with a conventional shutter button as part of the bar assembly on the door and was available with a Compur Rapid or the Prontor S shutter. By 1954, the third version had an accessory shoe for a flashgun or rangefinder and either a Prontor SV or Synchro-Compur shutter. The Vito II is a really nice compact pocketable camera and, subject to the usual checks that the shutter, lens, focusing mount and bellows are sound, is likely to be reliable as a camera to use, despite being around 60 years old.

In 1954, Voigtländer responded to the

fashion for rigid-bodied 35mm cameras by introducing the Vito B, one of the most popular 35mm cameras of the decade. With Leica-like build quality, superb Color Skopar lenses, either a four-speed Pronto or an eight-speed Prontor SVS shutter, the Vito B was the choice of holiday photographers and

Vito duo

The folding Vito IIa beside a 1955 original type Vito B with f/2.8 Color Skopar. The Vito IIa had the viewfinder assembly and self-cocking lever wind of the Vito B



Original Vito

This close-up of the lens and shutter assembly shows the remains of the hinge that held a yellow filter





'The Vito III remains a very expensive gem, mainly because it is a scarce and collectible camera with an exceptional f/2 lens'



Folding Vitos

L-r: The original Vito, with the characteristic 'V' of pre-war Voigtländer cameras on the front of the door; a second-type Vito II with shutter button; a Vito IIA and a Vito III

Accessories

Satin-chrome Voigtländer lens hoods and filters, and a blue close-up lens case beside two filters and their zip-up case



Vito II

A third-type with a Watameter accessory rangefinder mounted in the shoe



YOU MAY ALSO LIKE



A lever-wind post-war Retina IIa with f/2 Xenon and Synchro Compur

WATCH OUT FOR

The commonest fault in folding Vitos is faulty double-exposure prevention, so load a film, wind and fire it through. Check that the shutter-release bar of early models fires the shutter and be aware that post-war Vitos do not function properly without a film, so, when testing, turn the transport sprockets while winding on. Contact Voigtländer repair specialist Ed Trzoska on 0116 267 4247 or at e.trzoska@btworld.com.

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Vito II

A 1954 third-type, with shutter button and accessory shoe, beside a 1949/50 first-type Vito II (right) with only the door bar as a shutter release



The PCCGB holds regional meetings, runs a quarterly postal auction and publishes magazines full of classic camera information. Visit www.pccgb.com for more information and to download a membership form or call 01920 821 611 (but not for camera valuations).

Thanks to Vic Rumak, Don Baldwin, Ken Davis and John Kirkham of the PCCGB for the loan of cameras and help with photography.

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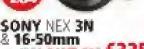


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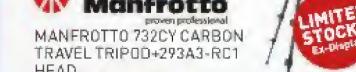


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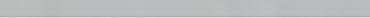
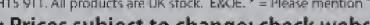
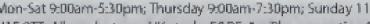
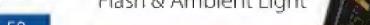
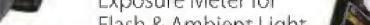
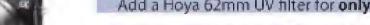
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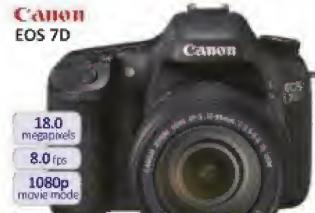
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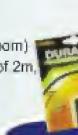
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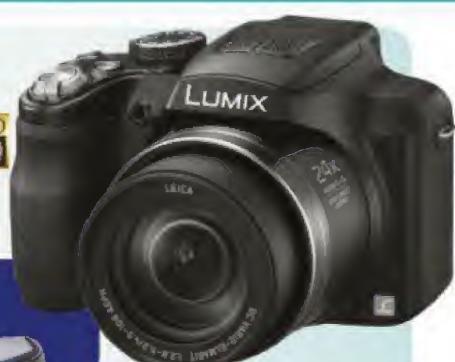
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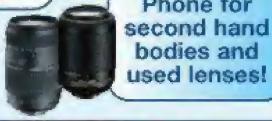


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DR-465 DL Backpack SAVE £30

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ROGER HICKS

When photographing a scene, or describing it with words, there is as much need to evoke as record

IMAGINE a perfect beach at sunset. There are a few other people on it, but not too many. The sky shades from deep blue to pinks, purples and reds. There are palm trees with glossy green leaves and rough brown trunks: all the colours are tinged with the red of the setting sun. A boat is pulled up on the shore, a frayed rope securing it to a rusty anchor half-buried in the sand. At the horizon, the sea meets the sky at a band of indigo, like a Hokusai wood-block print. The warm breeze caresses your skin and soths in the trees; the waves break on the beach with a gentle, perpetual roar. You can also hear, in the distance, the sounds of children playing: laughter, shouts. You can smell the sea, the seaweed, and, so faintly that you're not sure whether or not you're smelling it, a wood-fired barbecue and food cooking. This reminds you that you feel hungry, although perhaps a cold beer would go down well first.

Now, I've just painted you a picture. In words. If that's not a picture, and I haven't painted it, what is it, and what have I done? You may say that I have written a description, but isn't that a rather pedestrian way of phrasing it? 'A description' isn't the same as 'a word-picture'; or if you think it is, you have no poetry in your soul.

At first sight, there's a lot more in my word-painting than you could get into a photograph. The sounds, the smells, the warm breeze on your skin. But hold on. The warm air, the wood-smoke, the distant laughter: they do not exist on this page. They exist only in your memory or your imagination. I have not created them, or even recorded them: I have evoked them. The word-picture is a composite. This particular image is set in Goa, but with suitable changes, mostly matters of detail, I could move it to California, or Greece, or (perhaps with the absence of the warm breeze) my native Cornwall. Think of the images I'd use to ring the changes: surfboards, the scent of scrub-pines, the police patrolling the beach to make sure no one is enjoying themselves.

If instead of writing I am photographing the same scene(s), with the same intention(s), then once again I must as much evoke as describe or record. I might

choose to use a single picture, or a series, just as in words I might use a single paragraph or a whole page. I have to be careful, either way. If I tell you too much, whether in words or pictures, the magic evaporates: the description becomes ploddingly literal. If I tell you too little, I fail to caress those buttons in your memory that, when lightly pressed, recreate the scene I am describing. 'Lightly pressed' is important: again, I can tell you too much, slam my message home with a sledgehammer, tell you exactly what to think instead of gently guiding your thoughts in the direction I intend and letting you create the picture for yourself.

How, though, does this magic work? If we all knew, we'd all be great writers, great photographers. On the other hand, there are things we can study; even, to be brutal, tricks we can learn. Technique is far from irrelevant: grammar, composition, vocabulary, contrast. It cannot be taken for granted: few of us will have learned at school to write like Lawrence Durrell or Sir Terry Pratchett. We must also learn when to break the rules, when it is more appropriate to put our subject slap in the middle rather than on the thirds, when to have our horizon bisecting the picture, when 'ain't' works better than 'isn't'.

There's always an element of innate talent. Some people will always find composition easier than others, whether verbal or pictorial. There's also a question of dedication: some will put more effort into learning than others. Then there's time and exposure: time spent trying to create, exposure to the work of others. Personality matters too. Some have to wrestle with their muse; others can simply lie back and let her seduce them. Many will have had both experiences.

For that matter, there are different ways of seeing. What is 'the mind's eye'? For some, it's apparently like having a photograph pasted to the back of their eyelids. That's incomprehensible to me – I think in words. But however and whatever we see or think or feel, we should remember: sometimes it's easier to take or make a picture without a camera, rather than with one. **AP**

'What is "the mind's eye"? For some, it's apparently like having a photograph pasted to the back of their eyelids'

Roger Hicks is a much published author on photography. He has written more than three dozen books on the subject, many in partnership with his wife Frances Schultz. He has been a freelance photographer/writer since 1981, contributing to many magazines. Visit his website at www.rogerandfrances.com

Editorial

Amateur Photographer, IPC Media, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU

Telephone 0203 148 4138 Fax 0203 148 8123

Email amateurphotographer@ipcmedia.com

Picture returns: Telephone 0203 148 4121

Email appicturedesk@ipcmedia.com

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Amateur Photographer, IPC Media, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU. Telephone 0203 148 2516

Email mark_rankine@ipcmedia.com

Classified telephone 0203 148 2929. Fax: 0203 148 8158

Display telephone 0203 148 2516. Fax: 0203 148 8158

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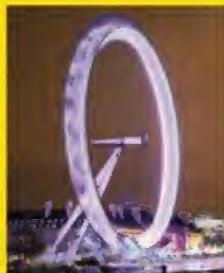
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